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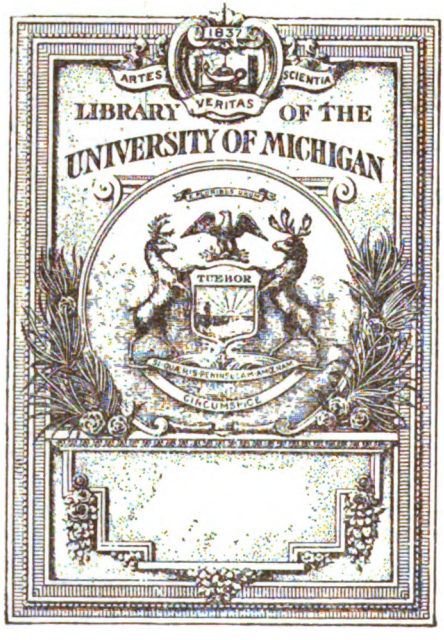

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MARK TWAIN'S LETTERS

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THE AMERICAN CLAIMANT
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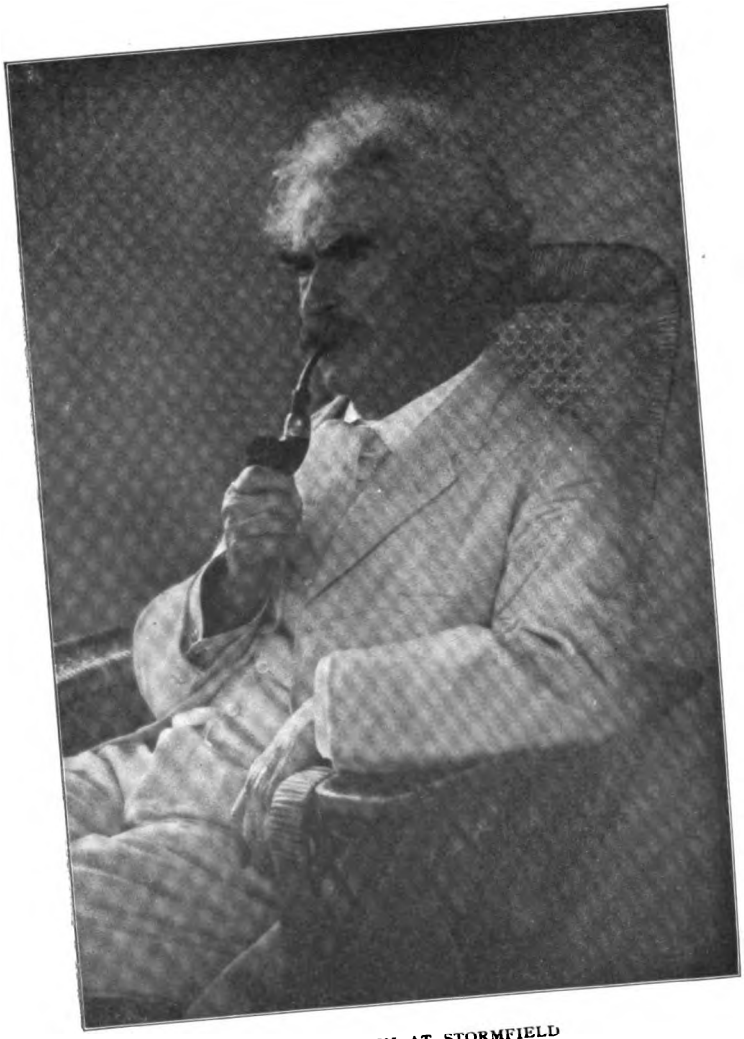

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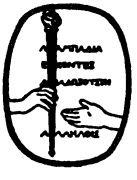

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FOREWORD

NOWHERE is the human being more truly revealed than in his letters. Not in literary letters—prepared with care, and the thought of possible publication—but in those letters wrought out of the press of circumstances, and with no idea of print in mind. A collection of such documents, written by one whose life has become of interest to mankind at large, has a value quite aside from literature, in that it reflects in some degree at least the soul of the writer.

The letters of Mark Twain are peculiarly of the revealing sort. He was a man of few restraints and of no affectations. In his correspondence, as in his talk, he spoke what was in his mind, untrammeled by literary conventions.

Necessarily such a collection does not constitute a detailed life story, but is supplementary to it. An extended biography of Mark Twain has already been published. His letters are here gathered for those who wish to pursue the subject somewhat more exhaustively from the strictly personal side. Selections from this correspondence were used in the biography mentioned. Most of these are here reprinted in the belief that an owner of the "Letters" will wish the collection to be reasonably complete.

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MARK TWAIN'S LETTERS

MARK TWAIN

A BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS, for nearly half a century known and celebrated as "Mark Twain," was born in Florida, Missouri, on November 30, 1835. He was one of the foremost American philosophers of his day; he was the world's most famous humorist of any day. During the later years of his life he ranked not only as America's chief man of letters, but likewise as her best known and best loved citizen.

The beginnings of that life were sufficiently unpromising. The family was a good one, of old Virginia and Kentucky stock, but its circumstances were reduced, its environment meager and disheartening. The father, John Marshall Clemens—a lawyer by profession, a merchant by vocation—had brought his household to Florida from Jamestown, Tennessee, somewhat after the manner of Judge Hawkins as pictured in *The Gilded Age*. Florida was a small town then, a mere village of twenty-one houses located on Salt River, but Judge Clemens, as he was usually called, optimistic and speculative in his temperament, believed in its future. Salt River would be made navigable; Florida would become a metropolis. He established a small business there, and located his family in the humble frame cottage where, five months later, was born a baby boy to whom they gave the name of Samuel—a family

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name—and added Langhorne, after an old Virginia friend of his father.

The child was puny, and did not make a very sturdy fight for life. Still he weathered along, season after season, and survived two stronger children, Margaret and Benjamin. By 1839 Judge Clemens had lost faith in Florida. He removed his family to Hannibal, and in this Mississippi River town the little lad whom the world was to know as Mark Twain spent his early life. In *Tom Sawyer* we have a picture of the Hannibal of those days and the atmosphere of his boyhood there.

His schooling was brief and of a desultory kind. It ended one day in 1847, when his father died and it became necessary that each one should help somewhat in the domestic crisis. His brother Orion, ten years his senior, was already a printer by trade. Pamela, his sister, also considerably older, had acquired music, and now took a few pupils. The little boy Sam, at twelve, was apprenticed to a printer named Ament. His wages consisted of his board and clothes—"more board than clothes," as he once remarked to the writer.

He remained with Ament until his brother Orion bought out a small paper in Hannibal in 1850. The paper, in time, was moved into a part of the Clemens home, and the two brothers ran it, the younger setting most of the type. A still younger brother, Henry, entered the office as an apprentice. The Hannibal *Journal* was no great paper from the beginning, and it did not improve with time. Still, it managed to survive—country papers nearly always manage to survive—year after year, bringing in some sort of return. It was on this paper that young Sam Clemens began his writings—burlesque, as a rule, of local characters and conditions—usually published in his brother's absence; generally resulting in trouble on his return. Yet they made the paper sell, and if Orion had but realized his brother's talent he might have turned it into capital even then.

In 1853 (he was not yet eighteen) Sam Clemens grew

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tired of his limitations and pined for the wider horizon of the world. He gave out to his family that he was going to St. Louis, but he kept on to New York, where a World's Fair was then going on. In New York he found employment at his trade, and during the hot months of 1853 worked in a printing-office in Cliff Street. By and by he went to Philadelphia, where he worked a brief time; made a trip to Washington, and presently set out for the West again, after an absence of more than a year.

Orion, meanwhile, had established himself at Muscatine, Iowa, but soon after removed to Keokuk, where the brothers were once more together, still following their trade. Young Sam Clemens remained in Keokuk until the winter of 1856–57, when he caught a touch of the South-American fever then prevalent, and decided to go to Brazil. He left Keokuk for Cincinnati, worked that winter in a printing-office there, and in April took the little steamer, *Paul Jones*, for New Orleans, where he expected to find a South-American vessel. In *Life on the Mississippi* we have his story of how he met Horace Bixby and decided to become a pilot instead of a South-American adventurer—jauntily setting himself the stupendous task of learning the twelve hundred miles of the Mississippi River between St. Louis and New Orleans—of knowing it as exactly and as unfailingly, even in the dark, as one knows the way to his own features. It seems incredible to those who knew Mark Twain in his later years —dreamy, unpractical, and indifferent to details—that he could have acquired so vast a store of minute facts as were required by that task. Yet within eighteen months he had become not only a pilot, but one of the best and most careful pilots on the river, intrusted with some of the largest and most valuable steamers. He continued in that profession for two and a half years longer, and during that time met with no disaster that cost his owners a single dollar for damage.

Then the war broke out. South Carolina seceded in December, 1860, and other States followed. Clemens was

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in New Orleans in January, 1861, when Louisiana seceded, and his boat was put into the Confederate service and sent up the Red River. His occupation gone, he took steamer for the North—the last one before the blockade closed. A blank cartridge was fired at them from Jefferson Barracks when they reached St. Louis, but they did not understand the signal, and kept on. Presently a shell carried away part of the pilot-house and considerably disturbed its inmates. They realized, then, that war had really begun.

In those days Clemens's sympathies were with the South. He hurried up to Hannibal and enlisted with a company of young fellows who were recruiting with the avowed purpose of "throwing off the yoke of the invader." They were ready for the field, presently, and set out in good order, a sort of nondescript cavalry detachment, mounted on animals more picturesque than beautiful. Still, it was a resolute band, and might have done very well, only it rained a good deal, which made soldiering disagreeable and hard. Lieutenant Clemens resigned at the end of two weeks, and decided to go to Nevada with Orion, who was a Union abolitionist and had received an appointment from Lincoln as Secretary of the new Territory.

In *Roughing It* Mark Twain gives us the story of the overland journey made by the two brothers, and a picture of experiences at the other end—true in aspect, even if here and there elaborated in detail. He was Orion's private secretary, but there was no private-secretary work to do, and no salary attached to the position. The incumbent presently went to mining, adding that to his other trades.

He became a professional miner, but not a rich one. He was at Aurora, California, in the Esmeralda district, skimping along, with not much to eat and less to wear, when he was summoned by Joe Goodman, owner and editor of the Virginia City *Enterprise*, to come up and take the local editorship of that paper. He had been contributing sketches to it now and then, under the pen-

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name of "Josh," and Goodman, a man of fine literary instincts, recognized a talent full of possibilities. This was in the late summer of 1862. Clemens walked one hundred and thirty miles over very bad roads to take the job, and arrived way-worn and travel-stained. He began on a salary of twenty-five dollars a week, picking up news items here and there, and contributing occasional sketches—burlesques, hoaxes, and the like. When the Legislature convened at Carson City he was sent down to report it, and then, for the first time, began signing his articles "Mark Twain," a river term, used in making soundings, recalled from his piloting days. The name presently became known up and down the Pacific coast. His articles were copied and commented upon. He was recognized as one of the foremost among a little coterie of overland writers, two of whom, Mark Twain and Bret Harte, were soon to acquire a world-wide fame.

He left Carson City one day, after becoming involved in a duel, the result of an editorial squib written in Goodman's absence, and went across the Sierras to San Francisco. The duel turned out farcically enough, but the Nevada law, which regarded even a challenge or its acceptance as a felony, was an inducement to his departure. Furthermore, he had already aspired to a wider field of literary effort. He attached himself to the *Morning Call*, and wrote occasionally for one or two literary papers—the *Golden Era* and the *Californian*—prospering well enough during the better part of the year. Bret Harte and the rest of the little Pacific-slope group were also on the staff of these papers, and for a time, at least, the new school of American humor mustered in San Francisco.

The connection with the *Call* was not congenial. In due course it came to a natural end, and Mark Twain arranged to do a daily San Francisco letter for his old paper, the *Enterprise*. The *Enterprise* letters stirred up trouble. They criticized the police of San Francisco so severely that the officials found means of making the

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writer's life there difficult and comfortless. With Jim Gillis, brother of a printer of whom he was fond, and who had been the indirect cause of his troubles, he went up into Calaveras County, to a cabin on Jackass Hill. Jim Gillis, a lovable, picturesque character (the Truthful James of Bret Harte), owned mining claims. Mark Twain decided to spend his vacation in pocket-mining, and soon added that science to his store of knowledge. It was a halcyon, happy three months that he lingered there, but did not make his fortune; he only laid the corner-stone.

They tried their fortune at Angel's Camp, a place well known to readers of Bret Harte. But it rained pretty steadily, and they put in most of their time huddled around the single stove of the dingy hotel of Angel's, telling yarns. Among the stories was one told by a dreary narrator named Ben Coon. It was about a frog that had been trained to jump, but failed to win a wager because the owner of a rival frog had surreptitiously loaded him with shot. The story had been circulated among the camps, but Mark Twain had never heard it until then. The tale and the tiresome fashion of its telling amused him. He made notes to remember it.

Their stay in Angel's Camp came presently to an end. One day, when the mining partners were following the specks of gold that led to a pocket somewhere up the hill, a chill, dreary rain set in. Jim, as usual, was washing, and Clemens was carrying water. The "color" became better and better as they ascended, and Gillis, possessed with the mining passion, would have gone on, regardless of the rain. Clemens, however, protested, and declared that each pail of water was his last. Finally he said, in his deliberate drawl:

"Jim, I won't carry any more water. This work is too disagreeable. Let's go to the house and wait till it clears up."

Gillis had just taken out a pan of earth. "Bring one more pail, Sam," he pleaded.

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"I won't do it, Jim! Not a drop! Not if I knew there was a million dollars in that pan!"

They left the pan standing there and went back to Angel's Camp. The rain continued and they returned to Jackass Hill without visiting their claim again. Meantime the rain had washed away the top of the pan of earth left standing on the slope above Angel's, and exposed a handful of nuggets—pure gold. Two strangers came along and, observing it, had sat down to wait until the thirty-day claim-notice posted by Jim Gillis should expire. They did not mind the rain—not with that gold in sight—and the minute the thirty days were up they followed the lead a few pans further, and took out—some say ten, some say twenty, thousand dollars. It was a good pocket. Mark Twain missed it by one pail of water. Still, it is just as well, perhaps, when one remembers *The Jumping Frog*.

Matters having quieted down in San Francisco, he returned and took up his work again. Artemus Ward, whom he had met in Virginia City, wrote him for something to use in his (Ward's) new book. Clemens sent the frog story, but he had been dilatory in preparing it, and when it reached New York, Carleton, the publisher, had Ward's book about ready for the press. It did not seem worth while to Carleton to include the frog story, and handed it over to Henry Clapp, editor of the *Saturday Press*—a perishing sheet—saying:

"Here, Clapp, here's something you can use."

The story appeared in the *Saturday Press* of November 18, 1865. According to the accounts of that time it set all New York in a roar, which annoyed, rather than gratified, its author. He had thought very little of it, indeed, yet had been wondering why some of his more highly regarded work had not found fuller recognition.

But *The Jumping Frog* did not die. Papers printed it and reprinted it, and it was translated into foreign tongues. The name of "Mark Twain" became known

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as the author of that sketch, and the two were permanently associated from the day of its publication.

Such fame as it brought did not yield heavy financial return. Its author continued to win a more or less precarious livelihood doing miscellaneous work, until March, 1866, when he was employed by the Sacramento *Union* to contribute a series of letters from the Sandwich Islands. They were notable letters, widely read and freely copied, and the sojourn there was a generally fortunate one. It was during his stay in the islands that the survivors of the wrecked vessel, the *Hornet*, came in, after long privation at sea. Clemens was sick at the time, but Anson Burlingame, who was in Honolulu, on the way to China, had him carried in a cot to the hospital, where he could interview the surviving sailors and take down their story. It proved a great "beat" for the *Union*, and added considerably to its author's prestige. On his return to San Francisco he contributed an article on the *Hornet* disaster to *Harper's Magazine*, and looked forward to its publication as a beginning of a real career. But, alas! when it appeared the printer and the proof-reader had somehow converted "Mark Twain" into "Mark Swain," and his dreams perished.

Undecided as to his plans, he was one day advised by a friend to deliver a lecture. He was already known as an entertaining talker, and his adviser judged his possibilities well. In *Roughing It* we find the story of that first lecture and its success. He followed it with other lectures up and down the Coast. He had added one more profession to his intellectual stock in trade.

Mark Twain, now provided with money, decided to pay a visit to his people. He set out for the East in December, 1866, *viâ* Panama, arriving in New York in January. A few days later he was with his mother, then living with his sister, in St. Louis. A little later he lectured in Keokuk, and in Hannibal, his old home.

It was about this time that the first great Mediterranean steamship excursion began to be exploited. No such ocean

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picnic had ever been planned before, and it created a good deal of interest East and West. Mark Twain heard of it and wanted to go. He wrote to friends on the *Alta-California*, of San Francisco, and the publishers of that paper had sufficient faith to advance the money for his passage, on the understanding that he was to contribute frequent letters, at twenty dollars apiece. It was a liberal offer, as rates went in those days, and a godsend in the fullest sense of the word to Mark Twain.

Clemens now hurried to New York in order to be there in good season for the sailing date, which was in June. In New York he met Frank Fuller, whom he had known as territorial Governor of Utah, an energetic and enthusiastic admirer of the Western humorist. Fuller immediately proposed that Clemens give a lecture in order to establish his reputation on the Atlantic coast. Clemens demurred, but Fuller insisted, and engaged Cooper Union for the occasion. Not many tickets were sold. Fuller, however, always ready for an emergency, sent out a flood of complimentaries to the school-teachers of New York and adjacent territory, and the house was crammed. It turned out to be a notable event. Mark Twain was at his best that night; the audience laughed until, as some of them declared when the lecture was over, they were too weak to leave their seats. His success as a lecturer was assured.

The *Quaker City* was the steamer selected for the great Oriental tour. It sailed as advertised, June 8, 1867, and was absent five months, during which Mark Twain contributed regularly to the *Alta-California*, and wrote several letters for the New York *Tribune*. They were read and copied everywhere. They preached a new gospel in travel literature—a gospel of seeing with an overflowing honesty; a gospel of sincerity in according praise to whatever he considered genuine, and ridicule to the things believed to be shams. It was a gospel that Mark Twain continued to preach during his whole career. It became, in fact, his chief literary message to the world, a world ready for that message.

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He returned to find himself famous. Publishers were ready with plans for collecting the letters in book form. The American Publishing Company, of Hartford, proposed a volume, elaborately illustrated, to be sold by subscription. He agreed with them as to terms, and went to Washington to prepare copy. But he could not work quietly there, and presently was back in San Francisco, putting his book together, lecturing occasionally, always to crowded houses. He returned in August, 1868, with the manuscript of the *Innocents Abroad*, and that winter, while his book was being manufactured, lectured throughout the East and Middle West, making his headquarters in Hartford, and in Elmira, New York.

He had an especial reason for going to Elmira. On the *Quaker City* he had met a young man by the name of Charles Langdon, and one day, in the Bay of Smyrna, had seen a miniature of the boy's sister, Olivia Langdon, then a girl of about twenty-two. He fell in love with that picture, and still more deeply in love with the original when he met her in New York on his return. The Langdon home was in Elmira, and it was for this reason that as time passed he frequently sojourned there. When the proofs of the *Innocents Abroad* were sent him he took them along, and he and sweet "Livy" Langdon read them together. What he lacked in those days in literary delicacy she detected, and together they pruned it away. She became his editor that winter—a position which she held until her death.

The book was published in July, 1869, and its success was immediate and abundant. On his wedding-day, February 2, 1870, Clemens received a check from his publishers for more than four thousand dollars, royalty accumulated during the three months preceding. The sales soon amounted to more than fifty thousand copies, and had increased to very nearly one hundred thousand at the end of the first three years. It was a book of travel, its lowest price three dollars and fifty cents. Even with our increased reading population no such sale is

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found for a book of that description to-day. And the *Innocents Abroad* holds its place — still outsells every other book in its particular field.

Mark Twain now decided to settle down. He had bought an interest in the *Express*, of Buffalo, New York, and took up his residence in that city in a house presented to the young couple by Mr. Langdon. It did not prove a fortunate beginning. Sickness, death, and trouble of many kinds put a blight on the happiness of their first married year and gave them a distaste for the home in which they had made such a promising start. A baby boy, Langdon Clemens, came along in November, but he was never a strong child. By the end of the following year the Clemenses had arranged for a residence in Hartford, temporary at first, later made permanent. It was in Hartford that little Langdon died, in 1872.

Clemens, meanwhile, had sold out his interest in the *Express*, severed his connection with the *Galaxy*, a magazine for which he was doing a department each month, and had written a second book for the American Publishing Company, *Roughing It*, published in 1872. In August of the same year he made a trip to London, to get material for a book on England, but was too much sought after, too continuously fêted, to do any work. He went alone, but in November returned with the purpose of taking Mrs. Clemens and the new baby, Susy, to England the following spring. They sailed in April, 1873, and spent a good portion of the year in England and Scotland. They returned to America in November, and Clemens hurried back to London alone to deliver a notable series of lectures under the management of George Dolby, formerly managing agent for Charles Dickens. For two months Mark Twain lectured steadily to London audiences—the big Hanover Square rooms always filled. He returned to his family in January, 1874.

Meantime, a home was being built for them in Hartford, and in the autumn of 1874 they took up residence in it—a happy residence, continued through seventeen years—

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well-nigh perfect years. Their summers they spent in Elmira, on Quarry Farm—a beautiful hilltop, the home of Mrs. Clemens's sister. It was in Elmira that much of Mark Twain's literary work was done. He had a special study there, some distance from the house, where he loved to work out his fancies and put them into visible form.

It was not so easy to work at Hartford; there was too much going on. The Clemens home was a sort of general headquarters for literary folk, near and far, and for distinguished foreign visitors of every sort. Howells and Aldrich used it as their half-way station between Boston and New York, and every foreign notable who visited America made a pilgrimage to Hartford to see Mark Twain. Some even went as far as Elmira, among them Rudyard Kipling, who recorded his visit in a chapter of his *American Notes*. Kipling declared he had come all the way from India to see Mark Twain.

Hartford had its own literary group. Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe lived near the Clemens home; also Charles Dudley Warner. The Clemens and Warner families were constantly associated, and *The Gilded Age*, published in 1873, resulted from the friendship of Warner and Mark Twain. The character of Colonel Sellers in that book has become immortal, and it is a character that only Mark Twain could create, for, though drawn from his mother's cousin, James Lampton, it embodies—and in no very exaggerated degree—characteristics that were his own. The tendency to make millions was always imminent; temptation was always hard to resist. Money-making schemes are continually being placed before men of means and prominence, and Mark Twain, to the day of his death, found such schemes fatally attractive.

It was because of the Sellers characteristics in him that he invested in a typesetting-machine which cost him nearly two hundred thousand dollars and helped to wreck his fortunes by and by. It was because of this characteristic that he invested in numberless schemes of lesser importance, but no less disastrous in the end. His

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one successful commercial venture was his association with Charles L. Webster in the publication of the *Grant Memoirs*, of which enough copies were sold to pay a royalty of more than four hundred thousand dollars to Grant's widow—the largest royalty ever paid from any single publication. It saved the Grant family from poverty. Yet even this triumph was a misfortune to Mark Twain, for it led to scores of less profitable book ventures and eventual disaster.

Meanwhile he had written and published a number of books. *Tom Sawyer*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, *Life on the Mississippi*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* were among the volumes that had entertained the world and inspired it with admiration and love for their author. In 1878–79 he had taken his family to Europe, where they spent their time in traveling over the Continent. It was during this period that he was joined by his intimate friend, the Rev. Joseph H. Twichell, of Hartford, and the two made a journey, the story of which is told in *A Tramp Abroad*.

In 1891 the Hartford house was again closed, this time indefinitely, and the family, now five in number, took up residence in Berlin. The typesetting-machine and the unfortunate publishing venture were drawing heavily on the family finances at this period, and the cost of the Hartford establishment was too great to be maintained. During the next three years he was distracted by the financial struggle which ended in April, 1894, with the failure of Charles L. Webster & Co. Mark Twain now found himself bankrupt, and nearly one hundred thousand dollars in debt. It had been a losing fight, with this bitter ending always in view; yet during this period of hard, hopeless effort he had written a large portion of the book which of all his works will perhaps survive the longest—his tender and beautiful story of Joan of Arc. All his life Joan had been his favorite character in the world's history, and during those trying months and years of the early nineties—in Berlin, in Florence, in Paris—he was

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conceiving and putting his picture of that gentle girl-warrior into perfect literary form. It was published in *Harper's Magazine*—anonymously, because, as he said, it would not have been received seriously had it appeared over his own name. The authorship was presently recognized. Exquisitely, reverently, as the story was told, it had in it the touch of quaint and gentle humor which could only have been given to it by Mark Twain.

It was only now and then that Mark Twain lectured during these years. He had made a reading tour with George W. Cable during the winter of 1884–85, but he abominated the platform, and often vowed he would never appear before an audience again. Yet, in 1895, when he was sixty years old, he decided to rebuild his fortunes by making a reading tour around the world. It was not required of him to pay his debts in full. The creditors were willing to accept fifty per cent. of the liabilities, and had agreed to a settlement on that basis. But this did not satisfy Mrs. Clemens, and it did not satisfy him. They decided to pay dollar for dollar. They sailed for America, and in July, 1895, set out from Elmira on the long trail across land and sea. Mrs. Clemens, and Clara Clemens, joined this pilgrimage, Susy and Jean Clemens remaining at Elmira with their aunt. Looking out of the car windows, the travelers saw Susy waving them an adieu. It was a picture they would long remember.

The reading tour was one of triumph. High prices and crowded houses prevailed everywhere. The author-reader visited Australia, New Zealand, India, Ceylon, South Africa, arriving in England, at last, with the money and material which would pay off the heavy burden of debt and make him once more free before the world. And in that hour of triumph came the heavy blow. Susy Clemens, never very strong, had been struck down. The first cable announced her illness. The mother and Clara sailed at once. Before they were half-way across the ocean a second cable announced that Susy was dead. The

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father had to meet and endure the heartbreak alone; he could not reach America in time for the burial. He remained in England, and was joined there by the sorrowing family.

They passed that winter in London, where he worked at the story of his travels, *Following the Equator*, the proofs of which he read the next summer in Switzerland. The returns from it, and from his reading venture, wiped away Mark Twain's indebtedness and made him free. He could go back to America, as he said, able to look any man in the face again.

Yet he did not go immediately. He could live more economically abroad, and economy was still necessary. The family spent two winters in Vienna, and their apartments there constituted a veritable court where the world's notables gathered. Another winter in England followed, and then, in the latter part of 1900, they went home—that is, to America. Mrs. Clemens never could bring herself to return to Hartford, and never saw their home there again.

Mark Twain's return to America was in the nature of a national event. Wherever he appeared throngs turned out to bid him welcome. Mighty banquets were planned in his honor.

In a house at 14 West Tenth Street, and in a beautiful place at Riverdale, on the Hudson, most of the next three years were passed. Then Mrs. Clemens's health failed, and in the autumn of 1903 the family went to Florence for her benefit. There, on the 5th of June, 1904, she died. They brought her back and laid her beside Susy, at Elmira. That winter the family took up residence at 21 Fifth Avenue, New York, and remained there until the completion of Stormfield, at Redding, Connecticut, in 1908.

In his later life Mark Twain was accorded high academic honors. Already, in 1888, he had received from Yale College the degree of Master of Arts, and the same college made him a Doctor of Literature in 1901. A year later the university of his own State, at Columbia, Missouri,

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conferred the same degree, and then, in 1907, came the crowning honor, when venerable Oxford tendered him the doctor's robe.

"I don't know why they should give me a degree like that," he said, quaintly. "I never doctored any literature. I wouldn't know how."

He had thought never to cross the ocean again, but he declared he would travel to Mars and back, if necessary, to get that Oxford degree. He appreciated its full meaning—recognition by the world's foremost institution of learning of the achievements of one who had no learning of the institutionary kind. He sailed in June, and his sojourn in England was marked by a continuous ovation. His hotel was besieged by callers. Two secretaries were busy nearly twenty hours a day attending to visitors and mail. When he appeared on the street his name went echoing in every direction and the multitudes gathered. On the day when he rose, in his scarlet robe and black mortar-board, to receive his degree (he must have made a splendid picture in that dress, with his crown of silver hair), the vast assembly went wild. What a triumph, indeed, for the little Missouri printer-boy! It was the climax of a great career.

Mark Twain's work was always of a kind to make people talk, always important, even when it was mere humor. Yet it was seldom that; there was always wisdom under it, and purpose, and these things gave it dynamic force and enduring life. Some of his aphorisms—so quaint in form as to invite laughter—are yet fairly startling in their purport. His paraphrase, "When in doubt, tell the truth," is of this sort. "Frankness is a jewel; only the young can afford it," he once said to the writer, apropos of a little girl's remark. His daily speech was full of such things. The secret of his great charm was his great humanity and the gentle quaintness and sincerity of his utterance.

His work did not cease when the pressing need of money came to an end. He was full of ideas, and likely to begin

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a new article or story at any time. He wrote and published a number of notable sketches, articles, stories, even books, during these later years, among them that marvelous short story—"The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg." In that story, as in most of his later work, he proved to the world that he was much more than a humorist—that he was, in fact, a great teacher, moralist, philosopher—the greatest, perhaps, of his age.

His life at Stormfield—he had never seen the place until the day of his arrival, June 18, 1908—was a peaceful and serene old age. Not that he was really old; he never was that. His step, his manner, his point of view, were all and always young. He was fond of children and frequently had them about him. He delighted in games—especially in billiards—and in building the house at Stormfield the billiard-room was first considered. He had a genuine passion for the sport; without it his afternoon was not complete. His mornings he was likely to pass in bed, smoking—he was always smoking—and attending to his correspondence and reading. History and the sciences interested him, and his bed was strewn with biographies and stories of astronomical and geological research. The vastness of distances and periods always impressed him. He had no head for figures, but he would labor for hours over scientific calculations, trying to compass them and to grasp their gigantic import. I remember once finding him highly elated over the fact that he had figured out for himself the length in hours and minutes of a "light year." He showed me the pages covered with figures, and was more proud of them than if they had been the pages of an immortal story. Then we played billiards, but even his favorite game could not make him altogether forget his splendid achievement.

It was on the day before Christmas, 1909, that heavy bereavement once more came into the life of Mark Twain. His daughter Jean, long subject to epileptic attacks, was seized with a convulsion while in her bath and died before assistance reached her. He was dazed by the suddenness

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of the blow. His philosophy sustained him. He was glad, deeply glad for the beautiful girl that had been released.

"I never greatly envied anybody but the dead," he said, when he had looked at her. "I always envy the dead."

The coveted estate of silence, time's only absolute gift, it was the one benefaction he had ever considered worth while.

Yet the years were not unkindly to Mark Twain. They brought him sorrow, but they brought him likewise the capacity and opportunity for large enjoyment, and at the last they laid upon him a kind of benediction. Naturally impatient, he grew always more gentle, more generous, more tractable and considerate as the seasons passed. His final days may be said to have been spent in the tranquil light of a summer afternoon.

His own end followed by a few months that of his daughter. There were already indications that his heart was seriously affected, and soon after Jean's death he sought the warm climate of Bermuda. But his malady made rapid progress, and in April he returned to Stormfield. He died there just a week later, April 21, 1910.

Any attempt to designate Mark Twain's place in the world's literary history would be presumptuous now. Yet I cannot help thinking that he will maintain his supremacy in the century that produced him. I think so because, of all the writers of that hundred years, his work was the most human—his utterances went most surely to the mark. In the long analysis of the ages it is the truth that counts, and he never approximated, never compromised, but pronounced those absolute verities to which every human being of whatever rank must instantly respond.

His understanding of subjective human nature—the vast, unwritten life within—was simply amazing. Such knowledge he acquired at the fountainhead—that is, from himself. He recognized in himself an extreme example of the human being with all the attributes of power and of weakness, and he made his exposition complete.

The world will long miss Mark Twain; his example and

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his teaching will be neither ignored nor forgotten. Genius defies the laws of perspective and looms larger as it recedes. The memory of Mark Twain remains to us a living and intimate presence that to-day, even more than in life, constitutes a stately moral bulwark reared against hypocrisy and superstition—a mighty national menace to sham.

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I

EARLY LETTERS, 1853. NEW YORK AND PHILADELPHIA

WE have no record of Mark Twain's earliest letters. Very likely they were soiled pencil notes, written to some school sweetheart—to "Becky Thatcher," perhaps—and tossed across at lucky moments, or otherwise, with happy or disastrous results. One of those smudgy, much-folded school notes of the Tom Sawyer period would be priceless to-day, and somewhere among forgotten keepsakes it may exist, but we shall not be likely to find it. No letter of his boyhood, no scrap of his earlier writing, has come to light except his penciled name, SAM CLEMENS, laboriously inscribed on the inside of a small worn purse that once held his meager, almost non-existent wealth. He became a printer's apprentice at twelve, but as he received no salary, the need of a purse could not have been urgent. He must have carried it pretty steadily, however, from its appearance—as a kind of symbol of hope, maybe—a token of that Sellers optimism which dominated his early life, and was never entirely subdued.

No other writing of any kind has been preserved from Sam Clemens's boyhood, none from that period of his youth when he had served his apprenticeship and was a capable printer on his brother's paper, a contributor to it when occasion served. Letters and manuscripts of those days have vanished—even his contributions in printed form are unobtainable. It is not believed that a single number of Orion Clemens's paper, the Hannibal *Journal*, exists to-day.

It was not until he was seventeen years old that Sam Clemens wrote a letter any portion of which has survived. He was no longer in Hannibal. Orion's unprosperous enterprise did not satisfy him. His wish to earn money and to see the world had carried him first to St. Louis, where his sister Pamela was living, then to New York City, where a World's Fair in a Crystal Palace

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was in progress. The letter tells of a visit to this great exhibition. It is not complete, and the fragment bears no date, but it was written during the summer of 1853.

Fragment of a letter from Sam L. Clemens to his sister Pamela Moffett, in St. Louis, summer of 1853:

. . . From the gallery (second floor) you have a glorious sight—the flags of the different countries represented, the lofty dome, glittering jewelry, gaudy tapestry, &c., with the busy crowd passing to and fro—tis a perfect fairy palace—beautiful beyond description.

The Machinery department is on the main floor, but I cannot enumerate any of it on account of the lateness of the hour (past 8 o'clock.) It would take more than a week to examine everything on exhibition; and as I was only in a little over two hours tonight, I only glanced at about one-third of the articles; and having a poor memory, I have enumerated scarcely any of even the principal objects. The visitors to the Palace average 6,000 daily—double the population of Hannibal. The price of admission being 50 cents, they take in about $3,000.

The Latting Observatory (height about 280 feet) is near the Palace—from it you can obtain a grand view of the city and the country round. The Croton Aqueduct, to supply the city with water, is the greatest wonder yet. Immense sewers are laid across the bed of the Hudson River, and pass through the country to Westchester county, where a whole river is turned from its course, and brought to New York. From the reservoir in the city to the Westchester county reservoir, the distance is *thirty-eight* miles! and if necessary, they could supply every family in New York with *one hundred barrels of water per day!*

I am very sorry to learn that Henry has been sick. He ought to go to the country and take exercise; for he is not half so healthy as Ma thinks he is. If he had my

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walking to do, he would be another boy entirely. Four times every day I walk a little over one mile; and working hard all day, and walking four miles, *is* exercise—I am used to it, now, though, and it is no trouble. Where is it Orion's going to? Tell Ma my promises are faithfully kept, and if I have my health I will take her to Ky. in the spring—I shall save money for this. Tell Jim and all the rest of them to write, and give me all the news. I am sorry to hear such bad news from Will and Captain Bowen. I shall write to Will soon. The Chatham-square Post Office and the Broadway office too, are out of my way, and I always go to the General Post Office; so you must write the direction of my letters plain, "New York City, N. Y.," without giving the street or anything of the kind, or they may go to some of the other offices. (It has just struck 2 A.M. and I always get up at 6, and am at work at 7.) You ask me where I spend my evenings. Where would you suppose, with a free printers' library containing more than 4,000 volumes within a quarter of a mile of me, and nobody at home to talk to? I shall write to Ella soon. Write soon

Truly your Brother

SAM.

P. S. I have written this by a light so dim that you nor Ma could not read by it.

He was lodging in a mechanics' cheap boarding-house in Duane Street, and we may imagine the bareness of his room, the feeble poverty of his lamp.

"Tell Ma my promises are faithfully kept." It was the day when he had left Hannibal. His mother, Jane Clemens, a resolute, wiry woman of forty-nine, had put together his few belongings. Then, holding up a little Testament:

"I want you to take hold of the end of this, Sam," she said, "and make me a promise. I want you to repeat after me these words: 'I do solemnly swear that I will not throw a card, or drink a drop of liquor while I am gone.'"

It was this oath, repeated after her, that he was keeping

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faithfully. The Will Bowen mentioned is a former playmate, one of Tom Sawyer's outlaw band. He had gone on the river to learn piloting with an elder brother, the "Captain." What the bad news was is no longer remembered, but it could not have been very serious, for the Bowen boys remained on the river for many years. "Ella" was Samuel Clemens's cousin and one-time sweetheart, Ella Creel. "Jim" was Jim Wolfe, an apprentice in Orion's office, and the hero of an adventure which long after Mark Twain wrote under the title of, "Jim Wolfe and the Cats."

There is scarcely a hint of the future Mark Twain in this early letter. It is the letter of a boy of seventeen who is beginning to take himself rather seriously—who, finding himself for the first time far from home and equal to his own responsibilities, is willing to carry the responsibility of others. Henry, his brother, three years younger, had been left in the printing-office with Orion, who, after a long, profitless fight, is planning to remove from Hannibal. The young traveler is concerned as to the family outlook, and will furnish advice if invited. He feels the approach of prosperity, and will take his mother on a long-coveted trip to her old home in the spring. His evenings? Where should he spend them, with a free library of four thousand volumes close by? It is distinctly a youthful letter, a bit pretentious, and wanting in the spontaneity and humor of a later time. It invites comment, now, chiefly because it is the first surviving document in the long human story.

He was working in the printing-office of John A. Gray and Green, on Cliff Street, and remained there through the summer. He must have written more than once during this period, but the next existing letter—also to Sister Pamela—was written in October. It is perhaps a shade more natural in tone than the earlier example, and there is a hint of Mark Twain in the first paragraph.

To Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

NEW YORK . . . , *Oct. Saturday '53.*

MY DEAR SISTER,—I have not written to any of the family for some time, from the fact, *firstly*, that I didn't know where they were, and *secondly*, because I have been fooling myself with the idea that I was going to leave

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New York every day for the last two weeks. I have taken a liking to the abominable place, and every time I get ready to leave, I put it off a day or so, from some unaccountable cause. It is as hard on my conscience to leave New York, as it was easy to leave Hannibal. I think I shall get off Tuesday, though.

Edwin Forrest has been playing, for the last sixteen days, at the Broadway Theatre, but I never went to see him till last night. The play was the "Gladiator." I did not like parts of it much, but other portions were really splendid. In the latter part of the last act, where the "Gladiator" (Forrest) dies at his brother's feet, (in all the fierce pleasure of gratified revenge,) the man's whole soul seems absorbed in the part he is playing; and it is really startling to see him. I am sorry I did not see him play "Damon and Pythias"—the former character being his greatest. He appears in Philadelphia on Monday night.

I have not received a letter from home lately, but got a "*Journal*" the other day, in which I see the office has been sold. I suppose Ma, Orion and Henry are in St. Louis now. If Orion has no other project in his head, he ought to take the contract for getting out some weekly paper, if he cannot get a foremanship. Now, for such a paper as the "*Presbyterian*" (containing about 60,000,)[1] he could get $20 or $25 per week, and he and Henry could easily do the work; nothing to do but set the type and make up the forms. . . .

If my letters do not come often, you need not bother yourself about me; for if you have a brother nearly eighteen years of age, who is not able to take care of himself a few miles from home, such a brother is not worth one's thoughts: and if I don't manage to take care of *No. 1*, be assured you will never know it. I am not afraid, however; I shall ask favors from no one, and endeavor to be (and shall be) as "independent as a wood-sawyer's clerk."

[1] Sixty thousand ems, type measurement.

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I never saw such a place for military companies as New York. Go on the street when you will, you are sure to meet a company in full uniform, with all the usual appendages of drums, fifes, &c. I saw a large company of soldiers of 1812 the other day, with a '*76* veteran scattered here and there in the ranks. And as I passed through one of the parks lately, I came upon a company of *boys* on parade. Their uniforms were neat, and their muskets about half the common size. Some of them were not more than seven or eight years of age; but had evidently been well-drilled.

Passage to Albany (160 miles) on the finest steamers that ply the Hudson, is now 25 cents—cheap enough, but is generally cheaper than that in the summer.

I want you to write as soon as I tell you where to direct your letter. I would let you know now, if I knew myself. I may perhaps be here a week longer; but I cannot tell. When you write tell me the whereabouts of the family. My love to Mr. Moffett and Ella. Tell Ella I intend to write to her soon, whether she wants me to nor not.

Truly your Brother,

SAML L. CLEMENS.

He was in Philadelphia when he wrote the next letter that has come down to us, and apparently satisfied with the change. It is a letter to Orion Clemens, who had disposed of his paper, but evidently was still in Hannibal. An extended description of a trip to Fairmount Park is omitted because of its length, its chief interest being the tendency it shows to descriptive writing—the field in which he would make his first great fame. There is, however, no hint of humor, and only a mild suggestion of the author of the *Innocents Abroad* in this early attempt. The letter as here given is otherwise complete, the omissions being indicated.

To Orion Clemens, in Hannibal:

PHILADELPHIA, PA. *Oct. 26, 1853.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—It was at least two weeks before I left New York, that I received my last letter from home:

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and since then, not a word have I heard from any of you. And now, since I think of it, it wasn't a letter, either, but the last number of the "Daily Journal," saying that that paper was sold, and I very naturally supposed from that, that the family had disbanded, and taken up winter quarters in St. Louis. Therefore, I have been writing to Pamela, till I've tired of it, and have received no answer. I have been writing for the last two or three weeks, to send Ma some money, but devil take me if I knew where she was, and so the money has slipped out of my pocket somehow or other, but I have a dollar left, and a good deal owing to me, which will be paid next Monday. I shall enclose the dollar in this letter, and you can hand it to her. I know it's a small amount, but then it will buy her a handkerchief, and at the same time serve as a specimen of the kind of stuff we are paid with in Philadelphia, for you see it's against the law, in Pennsylvania, to keep or pass a bill of less denomination than $5. I have only seen two or three bank bills since I have been in the State. On Monday the hands are paid off in sparkling gold, fresh from the Mint; so your dreams are not troubled with the fear of having doubtful money in your pocket.

I am subbing at the Inquirer office. One man has engaged me to work for him every Sunday till the first of next April, (when I shall return home to take Ma to Ky;) and another has engaged my services for the 24th of next month; and if I want it, I can get subbing *every night* of the week. I go to work at 7 o'clock in the evening, and work till 3 o'clock the next morning. I can go to the theatre and stay till 12 o'clock and then go to the office, and get work from that till 3 the next morning; when I go to bed, and sleep till 11 o'clock, then get up and loaf the rest of the day. The type is mostly agate and minion, with some bourgeois; and when one gets a good agate take,[1] he is sure to make money. I made $2.50 last Sunday, and was laughed at by all the hands, the poorest of

[1] "Agate," "minion," etc., sizes of type; "take," a piece of work. Type measurement is by ems, meaning the width of the letter m.

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whom sets 11,000 on Sunday; and if I don't set 10,000, at least, next Sunday, I'll give them leave to laugh as much as they want to. Out of the 22 compositors in this office, 12 at least, set 15,000 on Sunday.

Unlike New York, I like this Philadelphia amazingly, and the people in it. There is only one thing that gets my "dander" up—and that is the hands are always *encouraging* me: telling me—"it's no use to get discouraged —no use to be down-hearted, for there is more work here than you can do!" "Down-hearted," the devil! I have not had a particle of such a feeling since I left Hannibal, more than four months ago. I fancy they'll have to wait some time till they see me down-hearted or afraid of starving while I have strength to work and am in a city of 400,000 inhabitants. When I was in Hannibal, before I had scarcely stepped out of the town limits, nothing could have convinced me that I would starve as soon as I got a little way from home. . . .

The grave of Franklin is in Christ Church-yard, cor. of Fifth and Arch streets. They keep the gates locked, and one can only see the flat slab that lies over his remains and that of his wife; but you cannot see the inscription distinctly enough to read it. The inscription, I believe, reads thus:

"Benjamin and Deborah } Franklin"

I counted 27 cannons (6 pounders) planted in the edge of the sidewalk in Water St. the other day. They are driven into the ground, about a foot, with the mouth end upwards. A ball is driven fast into the mouth of each, to exclude the water; they look like so many posts. They were put there during the war. I have also seen them planted in this manner, round the old churches, in N. Y. . . .

There is one fine custom observed in Phila. A gentleman is always expected to hand up a lady's money for her. Yesterday, I sat in the front end of the 'bus, directly

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under the driver's box—a lady sat opposite me. She handed me her money, which was right. But, Lord! a St. Louis lady would think herself ruined, if she should be so familiar with a stranger. In St. Louis a man will sit in the front end of the stage, and see a lady stagger from the far end, to pay her fare. The Phila. 'bus drivers cannot cheat. In the front of the stage is a thing like an office clock, with figures from 0 to 40, marked on its face. When the stage starts, the hand of the clock is turned toward the 0. When you get in and pay your fare, the driver strikes a bell, and the hand moves to the figure 1 —that is, "one fare, and paid for," and there is your receipt, as good as if you had it in your pocket. When a passenger pays his fare and the driver does not strike the bell immediately, he is greeted "Strike that bell! will you?"

I must close now. I intend visiting the Navy Yard, Mint, etc., before I write again. You must write often. You see I have nothing to write interesting to you, while you can write nothing that will not interest me. Don't say my letters are not *long* enough. Tell Jim Wolfe to write. Tell all the boys where I am, and to write. Jim Robinson, particularly. I wrote to him from N. Y. Tell me all that is going on in H—l.

Truly your brother

SAM.

Those were primitive times. Imagine a passenger in these easy-going days calling to a driver or conductor to "Strike that bell!"

"H—l" is his abbreviation for Hannibal. He had first used it in a title of a poem which a few years before, during one of Orion's absences, he had published in the paper. "To Mary in Hannibal" was too long to set as a display head in single column. The poem had no great merit, but under the abbreviated title it could hardly fail to invite notice. It was one of several things he did to liven up the circulation during a brief period of his authority.

The doubtful money he mentions was the paper issued by private banks, "wild cat," as it was called. He had been paid

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with it in New York, and found it usually at a discount—sometimes even worthless. Wages and money were both better in Philadelphia, but the fund for his mother's trip to Kentucky apparently did not grow very rapidly.

The next letter, written a month later, is also to Orion Clemens, who had now moved to Muscatine, Iowa, and established there a new paper with an old title, *The Journal*.

To Orion Clemens, in Muscatine, Iowa:

PHILADELPHIA, *Nov. 28th, 1853.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I received your letter today. I think Ma ought to spend the winter in St. Louis. I don't believe in that climate—it's too cold for her.

The printers' annual ball and supper came off the other night. The proceeds amounted to about $1,000. The printers, as well as other people, are endeavoring to raise money to erect a monument to Franklin, but there are so many abominable foreigners here (and among printers, too,) who hate everything American, that I am very certain as much money for such a purpose could be raised in St. Louis, as in Philadelphia. I was in Franklin's old office this morning—the "North American" (formerly "Philadelphia Gazette") and there was at least one foreigner for every American at work there.

How many subscribers has the Journal got? What does the Job-work pay? and what does the whole concern pay?...

I will try to write for the paper occasionally, but I fear my letters will be very uninteresting, for this incessant night-work dulls one's ideas amazingly.

From some cause, I cannot set type nearly so fast as when I was at home. Sunday is a long day, and while others set 12 and 15,000, yesterday, I only set 10,000. However, I will shake this laziness off, soon, I reckon....

How do you like "free-soil?"—I would like amazingly to see a good old-fashioned negro.

My love to all

Truly your brother

SAM.

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We may believe that it never occurred to the young printer, looking up landmarks of Ben Franklin, that time would show points of resemblance between the great Franklin's career and his own. Yet these seem now rather striking. Like Franklin, he had been taken out of school very young and put at the printer's trade; like Franklin, he had worked in his brother's office, and had written for the paper. Like him, too, he had left quietly for New York and Philadelphia to work at the trade of printing, and in time Samuel Clemens, like Benjamin Franklin, would become a world-figure, many-sided, human, and of incredible popularity. The boy Sam Clemens may have had such dreams, but we find no trace of them.

There is but one more letter of this early period. Young Clemens spent some time in Washington, but if he wrote from there his letters have disappeared. The last letter is from Philadelphia and seems to reflect homesickness. The novelty of absence and travel was wearing thin.

To Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

PHILADELPHIA, *Dec. 5, '53.*

MY DEAR SISTER,—I have already written two letters within the last two hours, and you will excuse me if this is not lengthy. If I had the money, I would come to St. Louis now, while the river is open; but within the last two or three weeks I have spent about thirty dollars for clothing, so I suppose I shall remain where I am. I only want to return to avoid night-work, which is injuring my eyes. I have received one or two letters from home, but they are not written as they should be, and I know no more about what is going on there than the man in the moon. One only has to leave home to learn how to write an interesting letter to an absent friend when he gets back. I suppose you board at Mrs. Hunter's yet—and that, I think, is somewhere in Olive street above Fifth. Philadelphia is one of the healthiest places in the Union. I wanted to spend this winter in a warm climate, but it is too late now. I don't like our present prospect for cold weather at all.

Truly your brother

SAM.

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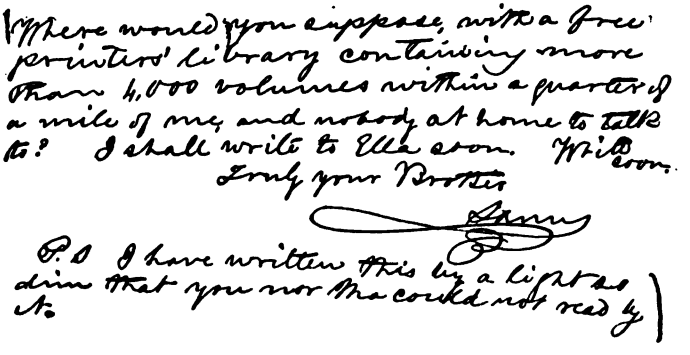
But he did not return to the West for another half year. The letters he wrote during that period have not survived. It was late in the summer of 1854 when he finally started for St. Louis. He sat up for three days and nights in a smoking-car to make the journey, and arrived exhausted. The river packet was leaving in a few hours for Muscatine, Iowa, where his mother and his two brothers were now located. He paid his sister a brief visit, and caught the boat. Worn-out, he dropped into his berth and slept the thirty-six hours of the journey.



EXAMPLE OF MARK TWAIN'S EARLY WRITING

It was early when he arrived—too early to arouse the family. In the office of the little hotel where he waited for daylight he found a small book. It contained portraits of the English rulers, with the brief facts of their reigns. Young Clemens entertained himself by learning this information by heart. He had a fine memory for such things, and in an hour or two had the printed data perfectly and permanently committed. This incidentally acquired knowledge proved of immense value to him. It was his groundwork for all English history.

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II

LETTERS 1856–61. KEOKUK, AND THE RIVER. END OF PILOTING

THERE comes a period now of nearly four years, when Samuel Clemens was either a poor correspondent or his letters have not been preserved. Only two from this time have survived—happily of intimate biographical importance.

Young Clemens had not remained in Muscatine. His brother had no inducements to offer, and he presently returned to St. Louis, where he worked as a compositor on the *Evening News* until the following spring, rooming with a young man named Burrough, a journeyman chair-maker with a taste for the English classics. Orion Clemens, meantime, on a trip to Keokuk, had casually married there, and a little later removed his office to that city. He did not move the paper; perhaps it did not seem worth while, and in Keokuk he confined himself to commercial printing. The Ben Franklin Book and Job Office started with fair prospects. Henry Clemens and a boy named Dick Hingham were the assistants, and somewhat later, when brother Sam came up from St. Louis on a visit, an offer of five dollars a week and board induced him to remain. Later, when it became increasingly difficult to pay the five dollars, Orion took his brother into partnership, which perhaps relieved the financial stress, though the office methods would seem to have left something to be desired. It is about at this point that the first of the two letters mentioned was written. The writer addressed it to his mother and sister—Jane Clemens having by this time taken up her home with her daughter, Mrs. Moffett.

To Mrs. Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

KEOKUK, IOWA, *June 10th, 1856.*

MY DEAR MOTHER & SISTER,—I have nothing to write. Everything is going on well. The Directory is coming on

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finely. I have to work on it occasionally, which I don't like a particle. I don't like to work at too many things at once. They take Henry and Dick away from me too. Before we commenced the Directory, I could tell before breakfast just how much work could be done during the day, and manage accordingly—but now, they throw all my plans into disorder by taking my hands away from their work. I have nothing to do with the book—if I did I would have the two book hands do more work than they do, or else I would drop it. It is not a mere *supposition* that they do not work fast enough—I *know* it; for yesterday the two book hands were at work all day, Henry and Dick all the afternoon, on the advertisements, and they set up five pages and a half—and I set up two pages and a quarter of the same matter *after supper*, night before last, and I don't work fast on such things. They are either excessively slow motioned or very lazy. I am not getting along well with the job work. I can't work blindly—without system. I gave Dick a job yesterday, which I calculated he would set in two hours and I could work off in three, and therefore just finish it by supper time, but he was transferred to the Directory, and the job, promised this morning, remains untouched. Through all the great pressure of job work lately, I never before failed in a promise of the kind.

Your Son

SAM.

Excuse brevity—this is my 3rd letter to-night.

Samuel Clemens was never celebrated for his patience; we may imagine that the disorder of the office tried his nerves. He seems, on the whole, however, to have been rather happy in Keokuk. There were plenty of young people there, and he was a favorite among them. But he had grown dissatisfied, and when one day some weeks later there fell into his hands an account of the riches of the newly explored regions of the upper Amazon, he promptly decided to find his fortune at the head-waters of the great South-American river. The second letter

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reports this momentous decision. It was written to Henry Clemens, who was temporarily absent—probably in Hannibal.

To Henry Clemens:

KEOKUK, *August 5th, '56.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,— . . . Ward and I held a long consultation, Sunday morning, and the result was that we two have determined to start to Brazil, if possible, in *six weeks* from now, in order to look carefully into matters there and report to Dr. Martin in time for him to follow on the first of March. We propose going *via* New York. Now, between you and I and the fence you must say nothing about this to *Orion*, for he thinks that Ward is to go clear through alone, and that I am to stop at New York or New Orleans until he reports. But that don't suit me. My confidence in human nature does not extend quite that far. I won't depend upon Ward's judgment, or anybody's else—I want to see with my own eyes, and form my own opinion. But you know what Orion is. When he gets a notion into his head, and more especially if it is an erroneous one, the Devil can't get it out again. So I know better than to combat his arguments long, but apparently yielded, inwardly determined to go clear through. Ma knows my determination, but *even she* counsels me to keep it from Orion. She says I can treat him as I did her when I started to St. Louis and went to New York—I can start to New York and go to South America! Although Orion talks grandly about furnishing me with fifty or a hundred dollars in six weeks, I could not depend upon him for ten dollars, so I have "feelers" out in several directions, and have already asked for a hundred dollars from one source (keep it to yourself.) I will lay on my oars for awhile, and see how the wind sets, when I may probably try to get more. Mrs. Creel is a great friend of mine, and has some influence with Ma and Orion, though I reckon they would not acknowledge it. I am going up there tomorrow, to press her into

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my service. I shall take care that Ma and Orion are plentifully supplied with South American books. They have Herndon's Report now. Ward and the Dr. and myself will hold a grand consultation tonight at the office. We have agreed that no more shall be admitted into our company.

I believe the Guards went down to Quincy today to escort *our first locomotive* home.

Write soon.

Your Brother,

SAM.

Readers familiar with the life of Mark Twain know that none of the would-be adventurers found their way to the Amazon. His two associates gave up the plan, probably for lack of means. Young Clemens himself found a fifty-dollar bill one bleak November day blowing along the streets of Keokuk, and after duly advertising his find without result, set out for the Amazon, by way of Cincinnati and New Orleans.

"I advertised the find and left for the Amazon the same day," he once declared, a statement which we may take with a literary discount.

He remained in Cincinnati that winter (1856–57) working at his trade. No letters have been preserved from that time, except two that were sent to a Keokuk weekly, the *Saturday Post*, and as these were written for publication, and are rather a poor attempt at burlesque humor—their chief feature being a pretended illiteracy—they would seem to bear no relation to this collection. He roomed that winter with a rugged, self-educated Scotchman—a mechanic, but a man of books and philosophies, who left an impress on Mark Twain's mental life.

In April he took up once more the journey toward South America, but presently forgot the Amazon altogether in the new career that opened to him. All through his boyhood and youth Samuel Clemens had wanted to be a pilot. Now came the long-deferred opportunity. On the little Cincinnati steamer, the *Paul Jones*, there was a pilot named Horace Bixby. Young Clemens idling in the pilot-house was one morning seized with the old ambition, and laid siege to Bixby to teach him the river. The terms finally agreed upon specified a fee to Bixby of five hundred dollars, one hundred down, the balance when the

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pupil had completed the course and was earning money. But all this has been told in full elsewhere, and is only summarized here because the letters fail to complete the story.

Bixby soon made some trips up the Missouri River, and in his absence turned his apprentice, or "cub," over to other pilots, such being the river custom. Young Clemens, in love with the life, and a favorite with his superiors, had a happy time until he came under a pilot named Brown. Brown was illiterate and tyrannical, and from the beginning of their association pilot and apprentice disliked each other cordially.

It is at this point that the letters begin once more—the first having been written when young Clemens, now twenty-two years old, had been on the river nearly a year. Life with Brown, of course, was not all sorrow, and in this letter we find some of the fierce joy of adventure which in those days Samuel Clemens loved.

To Orion Clemens and Wife, in Keokuk, Iowa:

SAINT LOUIS, *March 9th, 1858.*

DEAR BROTHER AND SISTER,—I must take advantage of the opportunity now presented to write you, but I shall necessarily be dull, as I feel uncommonly stupid. We have had a hard trip this time. Left Saint Louis three weeks ago on the Pennsylvania. The weather was very cold, and the ice running densely. We got 15 miles below town, landed the boat, and then one pilot. Second Mate and four deck hands took the sounding boat and shoved out in the ice to hunt the channel. They failed to find it, and the ice drifted them ashore. The pilot left the men with the boat and walked back to us, a mile and a half. Then the other pilot and myself, with a larger crew of men started out and met with the same fate. We drifted ashore just below the other boat. Then the fun commenced. We made fast a line 20 fathoms long, to the bow of the yawl, and put the men (both crews) to it like horses, on the shore. Brown, the pilot, stood in the bow, with an oar, to keep her head out, and I took the tiller. We would start the men, and all would go well till the yawl would bring up on a heavy cake of ice, and then the

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men would drop like so many ten-pins, while Brown assumed the horizontal in the bottom of the boat. After an hour's hard work we got back, with ice half an inch thick on the oars. Sent back and warped up the other yawl, and then George (the first mentioned pilot,) and myself, took a double crew of fresh men and tried it again. This time we found the channel in less than half an hour, and landed on an island till the Pennsylvania came along and took us off. The next day was colder still. I was out in the yawl twice, and then we got through, but the infernal steamboat came near running over us. We went ten miles further, landed, and George and I cleared out again—found the channel first trial, but got caught in the gorge and drifted helplessly down the river. The Ocean Spray came along and started into the ice after us, but although she didn't succeed in her kind intention of taking us aboard, her waves washed us out, and that was all we wanted. We landed on an island, built a big fire and waited for the boat. She started, and ran aground! It commenced raining and sleeting, and a very interesting time we had on that barren sandbar for the next four hours, when the boat got off and took us aboard. The next day was terribly cold. We sounded Hat Island, warped up around a bar and sounded again—but in order to understand our situation you will have to read Dr. Kane. It would have been impossible to get back to the boat. But the Maria Denning was aground at the head of the island—they hailed us—we ran alongside and they hoisted us in and thawed us out. We had then been out in the yawl from 4 o'clock in the morning till half past 9 without being near a fire. There was a thick coating of ice over men, yawl, ropes and everything else, and we looked like rock-candy statuary. We got to Saint Louis this morning, after an absence of 3 weeks—that boat generally makes the trip in 2.

Henry was doing little or nothing here, and I sent him to our clerk to work his way for a trip, by measuring wood piles, counting coal boxes, and other clerkly duties,

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which he performed satisfactorily. He may go down with us again, for I expect he likes our bill of fare better than that of his boarding house.

I got your letter at Memphis as I went down. That is the best place to write me at. The post office here is always out of my route, somehow or other. Remember the direction: "S.L.C., Steamer Pennsylvania Care Duval & Algeo, Wharfboat, Memphis." I cannot correspond with a paper, because when one is learning the river, he is not allowed to do or think about anything else.

I am glad to see you in such high spirits about the land, and I hope you will remain so, if you never get richer. I seldom venture to think about our landed wealth, for "hope deferred maketh the heart sick."

I *did* intend to *answer* your letter, but I am too lazy and too sleepy now. We have had a rough time during the last 24 hours working through the ice between Cairo and Saint Louis, and I have had but little rest.

I got here too late to see the funeral of the 10 victims by the burning of the Pacific hotel in 7th street. Ma says there were 10 hearses, with the fire companies (their engines in mourning—firemen in uniform,) the various benevolent societies in uniform and mourning, and a multitude of citizens and strangers, forming, altogether, a procession of 30,000 persons! One steam fire engine was drawn by four white horses, with crape festoons on their heads.

Well, I am—just—about—asleep—

Your brother

SAM.

Among other things, we gather from this letter that Orion Clemens had faith in his brother as a newspaper correspondent, though the two contributions from Cincinnati, already mentioned, were not promising. Furthermore, we get an intimation of Orion's unfailing confidence in the future of the "land"—that is to say, the great tract of land in Eastern Tennessee which, in an earlier day, his father had bought as a heritage for his children. It is the same Tennessee land that had "millions in it" for Colonel Sellers — the land that would become,

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as Orion Clemens long afterward phrased it, "the worry of three generations."

The Doctor Kane of this letter is, of course, Dr. Elisha Kent Kane, the American Arctic explorer. Any book of exploration always appealed to Mark Twain, and in those days Kane was a favorite.

The paragraph concerning Henry, and his employment on the *Pennsylvania*, begins the story of a tragedy. The story has been fully told elsewhere,[1] and need only be sketched briefly here. Henry, a gentle, faithful boy, shared with his brother the enmity of the pilot Brown. Some two months following the date of the foregoing letter, on a down trip of the *Pennsylvania*, an unprovoked attack made by Brown upon the boy brought his brother Sam to the rescue. Brown received a good pummeling at the hands of the future humorist, who, though upheld by the captain, decided to quit the *Pennsylvania* at New Orleans and to come up the river by another boat. The Brown episode has no special bearing on the main tragedy, though now in retrospect it seems closely related to it. Samuel Clemens, coming up the river on the *A. T. Lacey*, two days behind the *Pennsylvania*, heard a voice shout as they approached the Greenville, Mississippi, landing:

"The *Pennsylvania* is blown up just below Memphis, at Ship Island! One hundred and fifty lives lost!"

It was a true report. At six o'clock of a warm, mid-June morning, while loading wood, sixty miles below Memphis, the *Pennsylvania's* boilers had exploded with fearful results. Henry Clemens was among the injured. He was still alive when his brother reached Memphis on the *Lacey*, but died a few days later. Samuel Clemens had idolized the boy, and regarded himself responsible for his death. The letter that follows shows that he was overwrought by the scenes about him and the strain of watching, yet the anguish of it is none the less real.

To Mrs. Orion Clemens:

MEMPHIS, TENN., *Friday, June 18th, 1858.*

DEAR SISTER MOLLIE,—Long before this reaches you, my poor Henry—my darling, my pride, my glory; my *all*, will have finished his blameless career, and the light

[1] *Mark Twain: A Biography*, by same author.

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of my life will have gone out in utter darkness. (O, God! this is hard to bear. Hardened, hopeless,—aye, lost—lost—lost and ruined sinner as I am—*I*, even *I*, have humbled myself to the ground and prayed as never man prayed before, that the great God might let this cup pass from me—that he would strike me to the earth, but spare my brother—that he would pour out the fulness of his just wrath upon my wicked head, but have mercy, mercy, mercy upon that unoffending boy. The horrors of three days have swept over me—they have blasted my youth and left me an old man before my time. Mollie, there are gray hairs in my head tonight. For forty-eight hours I labored at the bedside of my poor burned and bruised, but uncomplaining brother, and then the star of my hope went out and left me in the gloom of despair. Men take me by the hand and *congratulate* me, and call me "lucky" because I was not on the Pennsylvania when she blew up! May God forgive them, for they know not what they say.

Mollie you do not understand why I was not on that boat—I will tell you. I left Saint Louis on her, but on the way down, Mr. Brown, the pilot that was killed by the explosion (poor fellow,) quarreled with Henry without cause, while I was steering. Henry started out of the pilot-house—Brown jumped up and collared him—turned him half way around and *struck him in the face!*—and him nearly six feet high—struck my little brother. I was wild from that moment. I left the boat to steer herself, and avenged the insult—and the Captain said I was right—that he would discharge Brown in N. Orleans if he could get another pilot, and would do it in St. Louis, anyhow. Of course both of us could not return to St. Louis on the same boat—no pilot could be found, and the Captain sent me to the A. T. Lacey, with orders to her Captain to bring me to Saint Louis. Had another pilot been found, poor Brown would have been the "lucky" man.

I was on the Pennsylvania five minutes before she left N. Orleans, and I must tell you the truth, Mollie—*three*

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hundred human beings perished by that fearful disaster. Henry was asleep—was blown up—then fell back on the hot boilers, and I suppose that rubbish fell on him, for he is injured internally. He got into the water and swam to shore, and got into the flatboat with the other survivors.[1] He had nothing on but his wet shirt, and he lay there burning up with a southern sun and freezing in the wind till the Kate Frisbee came along. His wounds were not dressed till he got to Memphis, 15 hours after the explosion. He was senseless and motionless for 12 hours after that. But may God bless Memphis, the noblest city on the face of the earth. She has done her duty by these poor afflicted creatures—especially Henry, for he has had five—aye, ten, fifteen, *twenty* times the care and attention that any one else has had. Dr. Peyton, the best physician in Memphis (he is exactly like the portraits of Webster,) sat by him for 36 hours. There are 32 scalded men in that room, and you would know Dr. Peyton better than I can describe him, if you could follow him around and hear each man murmur as he passes—"May the God of Heaven bless you, Doctor!" The ladies have done well, too. Our second Mate, a handsome, noble hearted young fellow, will die. Yesterday a beautiful girl of 15 stooped timidly down by his side and handed him a pretty bouquet. The poor suffering boy's eyes kindled, his lips quivered out a gentle "God bless you, Miss," and he burst into tears. He made them write her name on a card for him, that he might not forget it.

Pray for me, Mollie, and pray for my poor sinless brother.

Your unfortunate Brother,
SAML. L. CLEMENS.

P. S. I got here two days after Henry.

[1] Henry had returned once to the *Pennsylvania* to render assistance to the passengers. Later he had somehow made his way to the flatboat.

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It is said that Mark Twain never really recovered from the tragedy of his brother's death—that it was responsible for the serious, pathetic look that the face of the world's greatest laugh-maker always wore in repose.

He went back to the river, and in September of the same year, after an apprenticeship of less than eighteen months, received his license as a St. Louis and New Orleans pilot, and was accepted by his old chief, Bixby, as full partner on an important boat. In *Life on the Mississippi* Mark Twain makes the period of his study from two to two and a half years, but this is merely an attempt to magnify his dullness. He was, in fact, an apt pupil and a pilot of very high class.

Clemens was now suddenly lifted to a position of importance. The Mississippi River pilot of those days was a person of distinction, earning a salary then regarded as princely. Certainly two hundred and fifty dollars a month was large for a boy of twenty-three. At once, of course, he became the head of the Clemens family. His brother Orion was ten years older, but he had not the gift of success. By common consent the younger brother assumed permanently the position of family counselor and financier. We expect him to feel the importance of his new position, and he is too human to disappoint us. Incidentally, we notice an improvement in his English. He no longer writes "between you and I."

Fragment of a letter to Orion Clemens. Written at St. Louis in 1859:

. . . I am not talking nonsense, now—I am in earnest, I want you to keep your troubles and your plans out of the reach of meddlers, until the latter are consummated, so that in case you fail, no one will know it but yourself.

Above all things (between you and me) never tell Ma any of your troubles; she never slept a wink the night your last letter came, and she looks distressed yet. Write only cheerful news to her. You know that she will not be satisfied so long as she thinks anything is going on that she is ignorant of—and she makes a little fuss about it when her suspicions are awakened; but that makes no difference—*I* know that it is better that she be kept

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in the dark concerning all things of an unpleasant nature. She upbraids me occasionally for giving her only the bright side of my affairs (but unfortunately for her she has to put up with it, for I know that troubles that I curse awhile and forget, would disturb her slumbers for some time.) (Parenthesis No. 2—Possibly because she is deprived of the soothing consolation of swearing.) Tell her the good news and me the bad.

Putting all things together, I begin to think I am rather lucky than otherwise—a notion which I was slow to take up. The other night I was about to round to for a storm —but concluded that I could find a smoother bank somewhere. I landed 5 miles below. The storm came—passed away and did not injure us. Coming up, day before yesterday, I looked at the spot I first chose, and half the trees on the bank were torn to shreds. We couldn't have lived 5 minutes in such a tornado. And I am also lucky in having a berth, while all the young pilots are idle. This is the luckiest circumstance that ever befell me. Not on account of the wages—for that is a secondary consideration—but from the fact that the City of Memphis is the largest boat in the trade and the hardest to pilot, and consequently I can get a reputation on her, which is a thing I never could accomplish on a transient boat. I can "bank" in the neighborhood of $100 a month on her, and that will satisfy me for the present (principally because the other youngsters are *sucking their fingers.*) Bless me! what a pleasure there is in revenge! and what vast respect Prosperity commands! Why, six months ago, I could enter the "Rooms," and receive only a customary fraternal greeting—but now they say, "Why, how *are* you, old fellow—when did you get in?"

And the young pilots who used to tell me, patronizingly, that I could never learn the river cannot keep from showing a little of their chagrin at seeing me so far ahead of them. Permit me to "blow my horn," for I derive a *living* pleasure from these things, and I must confess that when I go to pay my dues, I rather like to let the d—d

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rascals get a glimpse of a hundred dollar bill peeping out from amongst notes of smaller dimensions, whose face I do *not* exhibit! You will despise this egotism, but I tell you there is a "stern joy" in it. . . .

Pilots did not remain long on one boat, as a rule; just why it is not so easy to understand. Perhaps they liked the experience of change; perhaps both captain and pilot liked the pursuit of the ideal. In the light-hearted letter that follows—written to a friend of the family, formerly of Hannibal—we get something of the uncertainty of the pilot's engagements.

To Mrs. Elizabeth W. Smith, in Jackson, Cape Girardeau County, Mo.:

ST. LOUIS, *Oct. 31* [probably 1859].

DEAR AUNT BETSEY,—Ma has not written you, because she did not know when I would get started down the river again. . . .

You see, Aunt Betsey, I made but one trip on the packet after you left, and then concluded to remain at home awhile. I have just discovered this morning that I am to go to New Orleans on the "Col. Chambers"—fine, light-draught, swift-running passenger steamer—all modern accommodations and improvements — through with dispatch—for freight or passage apply on board, or to —but—I have forgotten the agent's name—however, it makes no difference—and as I was saying, or had intended to say, Aunt Betsey, probably, if you are ready to come up, you had better take the "Ben Lewis," the best boat in the packet line. She will be at Cape Girardeau at noon on Saturday (day after tomorrow,) and will reach here at breakfast time, Sunday. If Mr. Hamilton is chief clerk,—very well, I am slightly acquainted with him. And if Messrs. Carter Gray and Dean Somebody (I have forgotten his other name,) are in the pilot-house —very well again—I am acquainted with them. Just tell Mr. Gray, Aunt Betsey—that I wish him to place himself at your command.

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All the family are well except myself—*I* am in a bad way again—disease, *Love*, in its most malignant form. Hopes are entertained of my recovery, however. At the dinner table—excellent symptom—I am still as "terrible as an army with banners."

Aunt Betsey—the wickedness of this world—but I haven't time to moralize this morning.

Goodbye

SAM CLEMENS.

As we do not hear of this "attack" again, the recovery was probably prompt. His letters are not frequent enough for us to keep track of his boats, but we know that he was associated with Bixby from time to time, and now and again with one of the Bowen boys, his old Hannibal schoolmates. He was reveling in the river life, the ease and distinction and romance of it. No other life would ever suit him as well. He was at the age to enjoy just what it brought him—at the airy, golden, overweening age of youth.

To Orion Clemens, in Keokuk, Iowa:

ST. LOUIS, *Mch 18. 1860.*

MY DEAR BRO.,—Your last has just come to hand. It reminds me strongly of Tom Hood's letters to his family, (which I have been reading lately). But yours only *remind* me of his, for although there is a striking likeness, your humour is much finer than his, and far better expressed. Tom Hood's *wit*, (in his letters) has a savor of *labor* about it which is very disagreeable. Your letter is good. That portion of it wherein the old sow figures is the very best thing I have seen lately. Its quiet style resembles Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World," and "Don Quixote,"—which are my *beau ideals* of fine writing.

You have paid the preacher! Well, that is good, also. What a man wants with religion in these breadless times, surpasses my comprehension.

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Pamela and I have just returned from a visit to the most wonderfully beautiful painting which this city has ever seen—Church's "Heart of the Andes"—which represents a lovely valley with its rich vegetation in all the bloom and glory of a tropical summer—dotted with birds and flowers of all colors and shades of color, and sunny slopes, and shady corners, and twilight groves, and cool cascades—all grandly set off with a majestic mountain in the background with its gleaming summit clothed in everlasting ice and snow! I have seen it several times, but it is always a new picture—*totally* new—you seem to see nothing the second time which you saw the first. We took the opera glass, and examined its beauties minutely, for the naked eye cannot discern the little wayside flowers, and soft shadows and patches of sunshine, and half-hidden bunches of grass and jets of water which form some of its most enchanting features. There is no slurring of perspective effect about it—the most distant—the minutest object in it has a marked and distinct *personality*—so that you may count the very leaves on the trees. When you first see the tame, ordinary-looking picture, your first impulse is to turn your back upon it, and say "Humbug"—but your third visit will find your brain *gasping* and straining with futile efforts to take all the wonder in—and appreciate it in its fulness—and understand how such a miracle could have been conceived and executed by human brain and human hands. You will never get tired of looking at the picture, but your reflections—your efforts to grasp an intelligible Something—you hardly know what—will grow so painful that you will have to go away from the thing, in order to obtain relief. You may find relief, but you cannot banish the picture—it remains with you still. It is in my mind now—and the smallest feature could not be removed without my detecting it. So much for the "Heart of the Andes."

Ma was delighted with her trip, but she was disgusted with the girls for allowing me to embrace and kiss them

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—and she was horrified at the Schottische as performed by Miss Castle and myself. She was perfectly willing for me to dance until 12 o'clock at the imminent peril of my going to sleep on the after watch—but then she would top off with a very inconsistent sermon on dancing in general; ending with a terrific broadside aimed at that heresy of heresies, the Schottische.

I took Ma and the girls in a carriage, round that portion of New Orleans where the finest gardens and residences are to be seen, and although it was a blazing hot dusty day, they seemed hugely delighted. To use an expression which is commonly ignored in polite society, they were "hell-bent" on stealing some of the luscious-looking oranges from branches which overhung the fences, but I restrained them. They were not aware before that shrubbery could be made to take any queer shape which a skilful gardener might choose to twist it into, so they found not only beauty but novelty in their visit. We went out to Lake Pontchartrain in the cars.

Your Brother

SAM CLEMENS

We have not before heard of Miss Castle, who appears to have been one of the girls who accompanied Jane Clemens on the trip which her son gave her to New Orleans, but we may guess that the other was his cousin and good comrade, Ella Creel. One wishes that he might have left us a more extended account of that long-ago river journey, a fuller glimpse of a golden age that has vanished as completely as the days of Washington.

We may smile at the natural youthful desire to air his reading, and his art appreciation, and we may find his opinions not without interest. We may even commend them—in part. Perhaps we no longer count the leaves on Church's trees, but Goldsmith and Cervantes still deserve the place assigned them.

He does not tell us what boat he was on at this time, but later in the year he was with Bixby again, on the *Alonzo Child*. We get a bit of the pilot in port in his next.

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To Orion Clemens, in Keokuk, Iowa:

"ALONZO CHILD," N. ORLEANS, *Sep. 28th 1860.*

DEAR BROTHER,—I just received yours and Mollie's letter yesterday—they had been here two weeks—forwarded from St. Louis. We got here yesterday—will leave at noon to-day. Of course I have had no time, in 24 hours, to do anything. Therefore I'll answer after we are under way again. Yesterday, I had many things to do, but Bixby and I got with the pilots of two other boats and went off dissipating on a ten dollar dinner at a French restaurant—breathe it not unto Ma!—where we ate sheep-head, fish with mushrooms, shrimps and oysters—birds—coffee with brandy burnt in it, &c &c,—ate, drank and smoked, from 1 p.m. until 5 o'clock, and then—then the day was too far gone to do any thing.

Please find enclosed and acknowledge receipt of—
$20.00

In haste

SAM L. CLEMENS

It should be said, perhaps, that when he became pilot Jane Clemens had released her son from his pledge in the matter of cards and liquor. This license did not upset him, however. He cared very little for either of these dissipations. His one great indulgence was tobacco, a matter upon which he was presently to receive some grave counsel. He reports it in his next letter, a sufficiently interesting document. The clairvoyant of this visit was Madame Caprell, famous in her day. Clemens had been urged to consult her, and one idle afternoon concluded to make the experiment. The letter reporting the matter to his brother is fragmentary, and is the last remaining to us of the piloting period.

Fragment of a letter to Orion Clemens, in Keokuk, Iowa:

NEW OLEANS *February 6, 1861.*

. . . She's a very pleasant little lady—rather pretty—about 28,—say 5 feet 2 and one quarter—would weigh 116—

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has black eyes and hair—is polite and intelligent—used good language, and talks much faster than I do.

She invited me into the little back parlor, closed the door; and we were alone. We sat down facing each other. Then she asked my age. Then she put her hands before her eyes a moment, and commenced talking as if she had a good deal to say and not much time to say it in. Something after this style:

MADAME. Yours is a watery planet; you gain your livelihood on the water; but you should have been a lawyer—there is where your talents lie: you might have distinguished yourself as an orator, or as an editor; you have written a great deal; you write well—but you are rather out of practice; no matter—you will be *in* practice some day; you have a superb constitution, and as excellent health as any man in the world; you have great powers of endurance; in your profession your strength holds out against the longest sieges without flagging; still, the upper part of your lungs, the top of them is slightly affected—you must take care of yourself; you do not drink, but you use *entirely* too much tobacco; and you must stop it; mind, not moderate, but *stop* the use of it totally; then I can almost promise you 86 when you will surely die; otherwise look out for 28, 31, 34, 47, and 65; be careful—for you are not of a long-lived race, that is on your *father's* side; you are the only healthy member of your family, and the only one in it who has anything like the certainty of attaining to a great age—so, stop using tobacco, and be careful of yourself. . . . In some respects you take after your father, but you are much *more* like your mother, who belongs to the long-lived, energetic side of the house. . . . You never brought all your energies to bear upon any subject but what you accomplished it—for instance, you are self-made, self-educated.

S. L. C. Which proves nothing.

MADAME. Don't interrupt. When you sought your present occupation you found a thousand obstacles in the

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way—obstacles unknown—not even suspected by any save you and me, since you keep such matters to yourself—but you fought your way, and hid the long struggle under a mask of cheerfulness, which saved your friends anxiety on your account. To do all this requires all the qualities I have named.

S. L. C. You flatter well, Madame.

MADAME. Don't interrupt. Up to within a short time you had always lived from hand to mouth—now you are in easy circumstances—for which you need give credit to no one but yourself. The turning point in your life occurred in 1840–7–8.

S. L. C. Which was?

MADAME. A death perhaps, and this threw you upon the world and made you what you are; it was always intended that you should make yourself; therefore, it was well that this calamity occurred as early as it did. You will never die of water, although your career upon it in the future seems well sprinkled with misfortune. You will continue upon the water for some time yet; you will not retire finally until ten years from now. . . . What is your brother's age? 35—and a lawyer? and in pursuit of an office? Well, he stands a better chance than the other two, and he may get it; he is too visionary—is always flying off on a new hobby; this will never do—tell him I said so. He is a good lawyer—a *very* good lawyer—and a fine speaker—is very popular and much respected, and makes many friends; but although he retains their friendship, he loses their confidence by displaying his instability of character. . . . The land he has now will be very valuable after a while—

S. L. C. Say 250 years hence, or thereabouts. Madame—

MADAME. No—less time—but never mind the land, that is a secondary consideration—let him drop that for the present, and devote himself to his business and politics with all his might, for he must hold offices under the Government. . . .

After a while you will possess a good deal of property

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—retire at the end of ten years—after which your pursuits will be literary—try the law—you will certainly succeed. I am done now. If you have any questions to ask—ask them freely—and if it be in my power, I will answer without reserve.—without reserve.

I asked a few questions of minor importance—paid her $2—and left, under the decided impression that going to the fortune teller's was just as good as going to the opera, and the cost scarcely a trifle more—*ergo*, I will disguise myself and go again, one of these days, when other amusements fail. Now isn't she the devil? That is to say, isn't she a right smart little woman?

When you want money, let Ma know, and she will send it. She and Pamela are always fussing about change, so I sent them a hundred and twenty quarters yesterday—fiddler's change enough to last till I get back, I reckon. SAM.

It is not so difficult to credit Madame Caprell with clairvoyant powers when one has read the letters of Samuel Clemens up to this point. If we may judge by those that have survived, her prophecy of literary distinction for him was hardly warranted by anything she could have known of his past performance. These letters of his youth have a value to-day only because they were written by the man who later was to become Mark Twain. The squibs and skits which he sometimes contributed to the New Orleans papers were bright, perhaps, and pleasing to his pilot associates, but they were without literary value. He was twenty-five years old. More than one author has achieved reputation at that age. Mark Twain was of slower growth; at that age he had not even developed a definite literary ambition. Whatever the basis of Madame Caprell's prophecy, we must admit that she was a good guesser on several matters, "a right smart little woman," as Clemens himself phrased it.

She overlooked one item, however: the proximity of the Civil War. Perhaps it was too close at hand for second sight. A little more than two months after the Caprell letter was written Fort Sumter was fired upon. Mark Twain had made his last trip as a pilot up the river to St. Louis—the nation was plunged into a four years' conflict.

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There are no letters of this immediate period. Young Clemens went to Hannibal, and enlisting in a private company, composed mainly of old schoolmates, went soldiering for two rainy, inglorious weeks, by the end of which he had had enough of war, and furthermore had discovered that he was more of a Union abolitionist than a slave-holding secessionist, as he had at first supposed. Convictions were likely to be rather infirm during those early days of the war, and subject to change without notice. Especially was this so in a border State.

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III

LETTERS 1861–62. ON THE FRONTIER. MINING ADVENTURES. JOURNALISTIC BEGINNINGS

Clemens went from the battle-front to Keokuk, where Orion was preparing to accept the appointment prophesied by Madame Caprell. Orion was a stanch Unionist, and a member of Lincoln's Cabinet had offered him the secretaryship of the new Territory of Nevada. Orion had accepted, and only needed funds to carry him to his destination. His pilot brother had the funds, and upon being appointed "private" secretary, agreed to pay both passages on the overland stage, which would bear them across the great plains from St. Jo to Carson City. Mark Twain, in *Roughing It*, has described that glorious journey and the frontier life that followed it. His letters form a supplement of realism to a tale that is more or less fictitious, though marvelously true in color and background. The first bears no date, but it was written not long after their arrival, August 14, 1861. It is not complete, but there is enough of it to give us a very fair picture of Carson City, "a wooden town; its population two thousand souls."

Part of a letter to Mrs. Jane Clemens, in St. Louis:

(Date not given, but *Sept.* or *Oct., 1861.*)

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I hope you *will* all come out here someday. But I shan't consent to invite you, until we can receive you in *style*. But I guess we shall be able to do that, one of these days. I intend that Pamela shall live on Lake Bigler until she can knock a bull down with her fist—say, about three months.

"Tell everything as it is—no better, and no worse." Well, "Gold Hill" sells at $5,000 per foot, cash down;

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"Wild cat" isn't worth ten cents. The country is fabulously rich in gold, silver, copper, lead, coal, iron, quicksilver, marble, granite, chalk, plaster of Paris, (gypsum,) thieves, murderers, desperadoes, ladies, children, lawyers, Christians, Indians, Chinamen, Spaniards, gamblers, sharpers, coyotes (pronounced Ki-yo-ties,) poets, preachers, and jackass rabbits. I overheard a gentleman say, the other day, that it was "the d—dest country under the sun."—and that comprehensive conception I fully subscribe to. It never rains here, and the dew never falls. No flowers grow here, and no green thing gladdens the eye. The birds that fly over the land carry their provisions with them. Only the crow and the raven tarry with us. Our city lies in the midst of a desert of the purest—most unadulterated, and compromising *sand* —in which infernal soil nothing but that fag-end of vegetable creation, "sage-brush," ventures to grow. If you will take a lilliputian cedar tree for a model, and build a dozen imitations of it with the stiffest article of telegraph wire—set them one foot apart and then try to walk through them, you'll understand (provided the floor is covered 12 inches deep with sand,) what it is to wander through a sage-brush desert. When crushed, sage brush emits an odor which isn't exactly magnolia and equally isn't exactly polecat—but is a sort of compromise between the two. It looks a good deal like grease-wood, and is the ugliest plant that was ever conceived of. It is gray in color. On the plains, sage-brush and grease-wood grow about twice as large as the common geranium—and in my opinion they are a very good substitute for that useless vegetable. Grease-wood is a perfect—*most* perfect imitation in miniature of a live oak tree—barring the color of it. As to the *other* fruits and flowers of the country, there ain't any, except "Pulu" or "Tuler," or whatever they call it,—a species of unpoetical willow that grows on the banks of the Carson—a *river*, 20 yards wide, knee-deep, and so villainously rapid and crooked, that it looks like it had wandered into the country without intending

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it, and had run about in a bewildered way and got lost, in its hurry to get out again before some thirsty man came along and drank it up. I said we are situated in a flat, sandy desert—true. And surrounded on all sides by such prodigious mountains, that when you gaze at them awhile,—and begin to conceive of their grandeur—and next to feel their vastness expanding your soul—and ultimately find yourself growing and swelling and spreading into a giant—I say when this point is reached, you look disdainfully down upon the insignificant village of Carson, and in that instant you are seized with a burning desire to stretch forth your hand, put the city in your pocket, and walk off with it.

As to churches, I believe they *have* got a Catholic one here, but like that one the New York fireman spoke of, I believe "they don't *run* her now." Now, although we are *surrounded* by sand, the greatest part of the town is built upon what was once a very pretty grassy spot; and the streams of pure water that used to poke about it in rural sloth and solitude, now pass through on dusty streets and gladden the hearts of men by reminding them that there is at least something here that hath its prototype among the homes they left behind them. And up "King's Canon," (please pronounce can-yon, after the manner of the natives,) there are "ranches," or farms, where they say hay grows, and grass, and beets and onions, and turnips, and other "truck" which is suitable for cows—yes, and even Irish potatoes; also, cabbages, peas and beans.

The houses are mostly frame, unplastered, but "papered" inside with flour-sacks sewed together,—and the handsomer the "brand" upon the sacks is, the neater the house looks. Occasionally, you stumble on a stone house. On account of the dryness of the country, the shingles on the houses warp till they look like short joints of stove pipe split lengthwise.

(Remainder missing.)

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In this letter is something of the "wild freedom of the West," which later would contribute to his fame. The spirit of the frontier—of Mark Twain—was beginning to stir him.

There had been no secretary work for him to do, and no provision for payment. He found his profit in studying human nature and in prospecting native resources. He was not interested in mining—not yet. With a boy named John Kinney he made an excursion to Lake Bigler—now Tahoe—and located a timber claim, really of great value. They were supposed to build a fence around it, but they were too full of the enjoyment of camp-life to complete it. They put in most of their time wandering through the stately forest or drifting over the transparent lake in a boat left there by lumbermen. They built themselves a brush house, but they did not sleep in it. In *Roughing It* he writes, "It never occurred to us, for one thing; and, besides, it was built to hold the ground, and that was enough. We did not wish to strain it."

They were having a glorious time, when their camp-fire got away from them and burned up their claim. His next letter, of which the beginning is missing, describes the fire.

Fragment of a letter to Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

. . . The level ranks of flame were relieved at intervals by the standard-bearers, as we called the tall dead trees, wrapped in fire, and waving their blazing banners a hundred feet in the air. Then we could turn from this scene to the Lake, and see every branch, and leaf, and cataract of flame upon its bank perfectly reflected as in a gleaming, fiery mirror. The mighty roaring of the conflagration, together with our solitary and somewhat unsafe position (for there was no one within six miles of us,) rendered the scene very impressive. Occasionally, one of us would remove his pipe from his mouth and say,—"*Superb! magnificent! Beautiful!*—but—by the Lord God Almighty, if we attempt to sleep in this little patch tonight, we'll never live till morning!—for if we don't burn up, we'll certainly suffocate." But he was persuaded to sit up until we felt pretty safe as far as the *fire* was

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concerned, and then we turned in, with many misgivings. When we got up in the morning, we found that the fire had burned small pieces of drift wood within six feet of our boat, and had made its way to within 4 or 5 steps of us on the South side. We looked like *lava* men, covered as we were with ashes, and begrimed with smoke. We were very black in the face, but we soon washed ourselves white again.

John D. Kinney, a Cincinnati boy, and a first-rate fellow, too, who came out with Judge Turner, was my comrade. We staid at the Lake four days—I had plenty of fun, for John constantly reminded me of Sam Bowen when we were on our campaign in Missouri. But first and foremost, for *Annie's*, Mollie's, and Pamela's comfort, be it known that I have never been guilty of profane language since I have been in this Territory, and Kinney hardly ever swears.—But *sometimes* human nature gets the better of him. On the second day we started to go by land to the lower camp, a distance of three miles, over the mountains, each carrying an axe. I don't think we got *lost* exactly, but we wandered four hours over the steepest, rockiest and most dangerous piece of country in the world. I couldn't keep from laughing at Kinney's distress, so I kept behind, so that he could not see me. After he would get over a dangerous place, with infinite labor and constant apprehension, he would stop, lean on his axe, and look around, then behind, then ahead, and then drop his head and ruminate awhile. Then he would draw a long sigh, and say: "Well—could any Billygoat have scaled that place without breaking his —— neck?" And I would reply, "No,—I don't think he could." "No —you don't think he could—"(mimicking me,) "Why don't you *curse* the infernal place? You know you *want* to. —*I* do, and *will* curse the————thieving country as long as I live." Then we would toil on in silence for awhile. Finally I told him—"Well, John, what if we *don't* find our way out of this today—we'll know all about the country when we *do* get out." "Oh stuff—I know enough

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—and *too much* about the d—d villainous locality already." Finally, we reached the camp. But as we brought no provisions with us, the first subject that presented itself to us was, how to get back. John swore he wouldn't *walk* back, so we rolled a drift log apiece into the Lake, and set about making paddles, intending to straddle the logs and paddle ourselves back home sometime or other. But the Lake objected—got stormy, and we had to give it up. So we set out for the only house on this side of the Lake—three miles from there, down the shore. We found the way without any trouble, reached there before sundown, played three games of cribbage, borrowed a dug-out and pulled back six miles to the upper camp. As we had eaten nothing since sunrise, we did not waste time in cooking our supper or in eating it, either. After supper we got out our pipes—built a rousing camp fire in the open air—established a faro bank (an institution of this country,) on our huge flat granite dining table, and bet white beans till one o'clock, when John went to bed. We were up before the sun the next morning, went out on the Lake and caught a fine trout for breakfast. But unfortunately, I spoilt part of the breakfast. We had coffee and tea boiling on the fire, in coffee-pots and fearing they might not be strong enough, I added more ground coffee, and more tea, but—you know mistakes will happen.—I put the tea in the coffee-pot, and the coffee in the tea-pot—and if you imagine that they were not villainous mixtures, just try the effect once.

And so Bella is to be married on the 1st of Oct. Well, I send her and her husband my very best wishes, and—I may not be here—but wherever I am on that night, we'll have a rousing camp-fire and a jollification in honor of the event.

In a day or two we shall probably go to the Lake and build another cabin and fence, and get everything into satisfactory trim before our trip to Esmeralda about the first of November.

What has become of Sam Bowen? I would give my

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last shirt to have him out here. I will make no promises, but I believe if John would give him a thousand dollars and send him out here he would not regret it. He might possibly do very well here, but he could do little without capital.

Remember me to all my St. Louis and Keokuk friends, and tell Challie and Hallie Renson that I heard a military band play "What are the Wild Waves Saying?" the other night, and it reminded me very forcibly of them. It brought Ella Creel and Belle across the Desert too in an instant, for they sang the song in Orion's yard the first time I ever heard it. It was like meeting an old friend. I tell you I could have swallowed that whole band, trombone and all, if such a compliment would have been any gratification to them.

Love to the young folks,

SAM.

The reference in the foregoing letter to Esmeralda has to do with mining plans. He was beginning to be mildly interested, and, with his brother Orion, had acquired "feet" in an Esmeralda camp, probably at a very small price—so small as to hold out no exciting prospect of riches. In his next letter he gives us the size of this claim, which he has visited. His interest, however, still appears to be chiefly in his timber claim on Lake Bigler (Tahoe), though we are never to hear of it again after this letter.

To Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

CARSON CITY, *Oct. 25, 1861.*

MY DEAR SISTER,—I have just finished reading your letter and Ma's of Sept. 8th. How in the world could they have been so long coming? You ask me if I have forgotten my promise to lay a claim for Mr. Moffett. By no means. I have already laid a timber claim on the borders of a lake (Bigler) which throws Como in the shade —and if we succeed in getting one Mr. Jones to move his saw-mill up there, Mr. Moffett can just consider that

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claim better than bank stock. Jones says he will move his mill up next spring. In that claim I took up about two miles in length by one in width—and the names in it are as follows: "Sam. L. Clemens, Wm. A. Moffett, Thos. Nye" and three others. It is situated on "Sam Clemens Bay"—so named by Capt. Nye—and it goes by that name among the inhabitants of that region. I had better stop about "the Lake," though,—for whenever I think of it I want to go there and *die*, the place is so beautiful. I'll build a country seat there one of these days that will make the Devil's mouth water if he ever visits the earth. Jim Lampton will never know whether I laid a claim there for him or not until he comes here *himself*. We have now got about 1,650 feet of mining ground—and if it proves *good*, Mr. Moffett's name will go in—if not, I can get "feet" for him in the Spring which *will* be good. You see, Pamela, the trouble does not consist in getting mining ground—for that is plenty enough—but the money to work it with after you get it is the mischief. When I was in Esmeralda, a young fellow gave me fifty feet in the "Black Warrior"—an unprospected claim. The other day he wrote me that he had gone down eight feet on the ledge, and found it eight feet thick—and pretty good rock, too. He said he could take out rock *now* if there were a mill to crush it—but the mills are all engaged (there are only four of them) so, if I were willing, he would suspend work until Spring. I wrote him to let it alone at present—because, you see, in the Spring I can go down myself and help him look after it. There will then be twenty mills there. Orion and I have confidence enough in this country to think that if the war will let us alone we can make Mr. Moffett rich without its ever costing him a cent of money or particle of trouble. We shall lay plenty of claims for him, but if they never *pay* him anything, they will never cost him anything, Orion and I are not financiers. Therefore, you *must* persuade Uncle Jim to come out here and help us in that line. I have written to him twice to come.

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I wrote him today. In both letters I told him not to let you or Ma know that we dealt in such romantic nonsense as "brilliant prospects," because I always did hate for any one to know what my plans or hopes or prospects were—for, if I kept people in ignorance in these matters, no one could be disappointed but myself, if they were not realized. You know I never told you that I went on the river under a promise to pay Bixby $500, until I had paid the money and cleared my skirts of the possibility of having my judgment criticised. I would not say anything about our prospects now, if we were nearer home. But I suppose at this distance you are more anxious than you would be if you saw us every month—and therefore it is hardly fair to keep you in the dark. However, keep these matters to yourselves, and then if we fail, we'll keep the laugh in the family.

What we want now is something that will commence paying immediately. We have got a chance to get into a claim where they say a tunnel has been run 150 feet, and the ledge struck. I got a horse yesterday, and went out with the Attorney-General and the claim-owner—and we tried to go to the claim by a new route, and got lost in the mountains—sunset overtook us before we found the claim—my horse got too lame to carry me, and I got down and drove him ahead of me till within four miles of town—then we sent Rice on ahead. Bunker, (whose horse was in good condition,) undertook to lead mine, and I followed after him. Darkness shut him out from my view in less than a minute, and within the next minute I lost the road and got to wandering in the sage brush. I would find the road occasionally and then lose it again in a minute or so. I got to Carson about nine o'clock, at night, but not by the road I traveled when I left it. The General says my horse did very well for awhile, but soon refused to lead. Then he dismounted, and had a jolly time driving both horses ahead of him and chasing them here and there through the sage brush (it does my *soul* good when I think of it) until he got to town, when both animals

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deserted him, and he cursed them handsomely and came home alone. Of course the horses went to their stables

Tell Sammy I will lay a claim for him, and he must come out and attend to it. He must get rid of that propensity for tumbling down, though, for when we get fairly started here, I don't think we shall have time to pick up those who fall. . . .

That is Stoughter's house, I expect, that Cousin Jim has moved into. This is just the country for Cousin Jim to live in. I don't believe it would take him six months to make $100,000 here, if he had 3,000 dollars to commence with. I suppose he can't leave his family though.

Tell Mrs. Benson I never intend to be a lawyer. I have been a slave several times in my life, but I'll never be one again. I always intend to be so situated (*unless* I marry,) that I can "pull up stakes" and clear out whenever I feel like it.

We are very thankful to you, Pamela, for the papers you send. We have received half a dozen or more, and, next to letters, they are the most welcome visitors we have.

Write *oftener*, Pamela.

Yr. Brother

SAM.

The "Cousin Jim" mentioned in this letter is the original of the character of Colonel Sellers. Whatever Mark Twain's later opinion of Cousin Jim Lampton's financial genius may have been, he seems to have respected it at this time.

More than three months pass until we have another letter, and in that time the mining fever had become well seated. Mark Twain himself was full of the Sellers optimism, and it was bound to overflow, fortify as he would against it.

He met with little enough encouragement. With three companions, in midwinter, he made a mining excursion to the much exploited Humboldt region, returning empty-handed after a month or two of hard experience. This is the trip picturesquely described in Chapters XXVII to XXXIII of *Roughing It*.[1] He

[1] It is set down historically in *Mark Twain: A Biography*. Harper & Brothers.

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mentions the Humboldt in his next letter, but does not confess his failure.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

CARSON CITY, *Feb. 8, 1862.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—By George Pamela, I begin to fear that I have invoked a Spirit of some kind or other which I will find some difficulty in laying. I wasn't much terrified by your growing *inclinations*, but when you begin to call *presentiments* to your aid, I confess that I "weaken." Mr. Moffett is right, as I said before—and I am not much afraid of his going wrong. Men are easily dealt with—but when you get the women started, you are in for it, you know. But I have decided on two things, viz: Any of you, or all of you, may live in California, for that is the Garden of Eden reproduced—but you shall never live in Nevada; and secondly, none of you, save Mr. Moffett, shall ever cross the Plains. If you were only going to Pike's Peak, a little matter of 700 miles from St. Jo, you might take the coach, and I wouldn't say a word. But I consider it over 2,000 miles from St. Jo to Carson, and the first 6 or 800 miles is mere Fourth of July, compared to the balance of the route. But Lord bless you, a *man* enjoys every foot of it. If you ever come here or to California, it must be by sea. Mr. Moffett must come by overland *coach*, though, by all means. He would consider it the jolliest little trip he ever took in his life. Either June, July, or August are the proper months to make the journey in. He could not suffer from heat, and three or four heavy army blankets would make the cold nights comfortable. If the coach were full of passengers, two good blankets would probably be sufficient. If he comes, and brings plenty of money, and fails to invest it to his entire satisfaction, I will prophesy no more.

But I will tell you a few things which you wouldn't have found out if I hadn't got myself into this scrape. I

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expect to return to St. Louis in July—per steamer. I don't say that I *will* return then, or that I shall *be able* to do it—but I *expect to*—you bet. I came down here from Humboldt, in order to look after our Esmeralda interests, and my sore-backed horse and the bad roads have prevented me from making the journey. Yesterday one of my old Esmeralda friends, Bob Howland, arrived here, and I have had a talk with him. He owns with me in the "Horatio and Derby" ledge. He says our tunnel is in 52 feet, and a small stream of water has been struck, which bids fair to become a "big thing" by the time the ledge is reached—sufficient to supply a mill. Now, if you knew anything of the value of water, here, you would perceive at a glance that if the water should amount to 50 or 100 inches, *we* wouldn't care whether school kept or not. If the ledge should prove to be worthless, we'd *sell the water* for money enough to give us quite a lift. But you see, the ledge *will not* prove to be worthless. We have located, near by, a fine site for a mill; and when we strike the ledge, you know, we'll have a mill-site, water power, and pay-rock, all handy. *Then* we shan't care whether we have capital or not. Mill-folks will build us a mill, and wait for their pay. If nothing goes wrong, we'll strike the ledge in June—and if we do, I'll be home in July, you know.

Pamela, don't you know that undemonstrated human calculations won't do to bet on? Don't you know that I have only *talked*, as yet, but proved nothing? Don't you know that I have expended money in this country but have made none myself? Don't you know that I have never held in my hands a gold or silver bar that belonged to me? Don't you know that it's all talk and no cider so far? Don't you know that people who always feel jolly, no matter where they are or what happens to them —who have the organ of hope preposterously developed —who are endowed with an uncongealable sanguine temperament—who never feel concerned about the price of corn—and who cannot, by any possibility, discover any

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but the *bright* side of a picture—are very apt to go to extremes, and exaggerate with 40-horse microscopic power? Of course I never tried to raise these suspicions in your mind, but then your knowledge of the fact that some people's poor frail human nature is a sort of crazy institution anyhow, ought to have suggested them to you. Now, if I hadn't thoughtlessly got you into the notion of coming out here, and thereby got myself into a scrape, I wouldn't have given you that highly-colored paragraph about the mill, etc., because, you know, if that pretty little picture should fail, and wash out, and go the Devil generally, it wouldn't cost me the loss of an hour's sleep, but you fellows would be so much distressed on my account as I could possibly be if "circumstances beyond my control" were to prevent my being present at my own funeral. But—but—

"In the bright lexicon of youth,
There's no such word as Fail—"
and I'll prove it!

And look here. I came near forgetting it. Don't you say a word to me about "trains" across the plains. Because I am down on that arrangement. That sort of thing is "played out," you know. The Overland Coach or the Mail Steamer is the thing.

You want to know something about the route between California and Nevada Territory? Suppose you take my word for it, that it is exceedingly jolly. Or take, for a winter view, J. Ross Brown's picture, in Harper's Monthly, of pack mules tumbling fifteen hundred feet down the side of a mountain. Why bless you, there's *scenery* on that route. You can stand on some of those noble peaks and see Jerusalem and the Holy Land. And you can start a boulder, and send it tearing up the earth and crashing over trees—down—down—down—to the very devil, Madam. And you would probably stand up there and look, and stare and wonder at the magnificence spread out before you till you starved to death, if let alone. But you should take someone along to keep you moving.

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Since you want to know, I will inform you that an eight-stamp water mill, put up and ready for business would cost about $10,000 to $12,000. Then, the water to run it with would cost from $1,000 to $30,000—and even more, according to the location. What I mean by that, is, that water powers in *this* vicinity, are immensely valuable. So, also, in Esmeralda. But Humboldt is a *new* country, and things don't cost so much there yet. I saw a good water power sold there for $750.00. But here is the way the thing is managed. A man with a good water power on Carson river will lean his axe up against a tree (provided you find him chopping cord-wood at $4 a day,) and taking his chalk pipe out of his mouth to afford him an opportunity to answer your questions, will look you coolly in the face and tell you his little property is worth forty or fifty thousand dollars! But you can easily fix *him*. You tell him that you'll build a quartz mill on his property, and make him a fourth or a third, or half owner in said mill in consideration of the privilege of using said property—and that will bring him to his milk in a jiffy. So he spits on his hands, and goes in again with his axe, until the mill is finished, when lo! out pops the quondam wood-chopper, arrayed in purple and fine linen, and prepared to deal in bank-stock, or bet on the races, or take government loans, with an air, as to the *amount*, of the most don't care-a-d-dest unconcern that you can conceive of. By George, if I *just* had a thousand dollars—*I'd* be all right! Now there's the "Horatio," for instance. There are five or six shareholders in it, and I *know* I could buy half of their interests at, say $20 per foot, now that flour is worth $50 per barrel and they are pressed for money. But I am hard up myself, and can't buy—and in June they'll strike the ledge and then "good-bye canary." I can't get it for love or money. Twenty dollars a foot! Think of it. For ground that is *proven* to be rich. Twenty dollars, Madam—and we wouldn't part with a foot of our 75 for five times the sum. So it will be in Humboldt next summer. The

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boys will get pushed and sell ground for a song that is worth a fortune. But I am at the helm, now. I have convinced Orion that he hasn't business talent enough to carry on a peanut stand, and he has solemnly promised me that he will meddle no more with mining, or other matters not connected with the Secretary's office. So, you see, if mines are to be bought or sold, or tunnels run, or shafts sunk, parties have to come to me—and me only. I'm the "firm," you know.

"How long does it take one of those infernal trains to go through?" Well, anywhere between three and five months.

Tell Margaret that if you ever come to live in California, that you can promise her a home for a hundred years, and a bully one—but she wouldn't like the country. Some people are malicious enough to think that if the devil were set at liberty and told to confine himself to Nevada Territory, that he would come here and look sadly around, awhile, and then get homesick and go back to hell again. But I hardly believe it, you know. I am saying, mind you, that *Margaret* wouldn't like the country, perhaps—nor the devil either, for that matter,—or any other man—but *I* like it. When it rains here, it never lets up till it has done all the raining it has got to do—and after that, there's a dry spell, you bet. Why, I have had my whiskers and moustaches so full of alkali dust that you'd have thought I worked in a starch factory and boarded in a flour barrel.

Since we have been here there has not been a fire—although the houses are built of wood. They "holler" fire sometimes, though, but I am always too late to see the smoke before the fire is out, if they ever have any. Now they raised a yell here in front of the office a moment ago. I put away my papers, and locked up everything of value, and changed my boots, and pulled off my coat, and went and got a bucket of water, and came back to see what the matter was, remarking to myself, "I guess I'll be on hand *this* time, any way." But I met a friend on

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the pavement, and he said, "Where you been? Fire's out half an hour ago."

Ma says Axtele was above "suspition"—but I have searched through Webster's Unabridged, and can't find the word. However, it's of no consequence—I hope he got down safely. I knew Axtele and his wife as well as I know Dan Haines. Mrs. A. once tried to embarrass me in the presence of company by asking me to name her baby, when she was well aware that I didn't know the sex of that Phenomenon. But I told her to call it Frances, and spell it to suit herself. That was about nine years ago, and Axtele had no property, and could hardly support his family by his earnings. He was a pious cuss, though. Member of Margaret Sexton's Church.

And Ma says "it looks like a man can't hold public office and be honest." Why, certainly not, Madam. A man *can't* hold public office and be honest. Lord bless you, it is a common practice with Orion to go about town stealing little things that happen to be lying around loose. And I don't remember having heard him speak the truth since we have been in Nevada. He even tries to prevail upon *me* to do these things, Ma, but I wasn't brought up in that way, you know. You showed the public what *you* could do in that line when you raised me, Madam. But then you ought to have raised me first, so that Orion could have had the benefit of my example. Do you know that he stole all the stamps out of an 8-stamp quartz mill one night, and brought them home under his over-coat and hid them in the back room?

Yrs. etc.,

SAM

A little later he had headed for the Esmeralda Hills. Some time in February he was established there in a camp with a young man by the name of Horatio Phillips (Raish). Later he camped with Bob Howland, who, as City Marshal of Aurora, became known as the most fearless man in the Territory, and, still later, with Calvin H. Higbie (Cal), to whom *Roughing It*

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would one day be dedicated. His own funds were exhausted by this time, and Orion, with his rather slender salary, became the financial partner of the firm.

It was a comfortless life there in the Esmeralda camp. Snow covered everything. There was nothing to do, and apparently nothing to report; for there are no letters until April. Then the first one is dated Carson City, where he seems to be making a brief sojourn. It is a rather heavy attempt to be light-hearted; its playfulness suggests that of a dancing bear.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens, in St. Louis:

CARSON CITY, *April 2, 1862.*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—Yours of March 2nd has just been received. I see I am in for it again—with Annie. But she ought to know that I was always stupid. She used to try to teach me lessons from the Bible, but I never could understand them. Doesn't she remember telling me the story of Moses, one Sunday, last Spring, and how hard she tried to explain it and simplify it so that I could understand it—but I *couldn't?* And how she said it was strange that while her ma and her grandma and her uncle Orion could understand anything in the world, I was so dull that I couldn't understand the "ea-siest thing?" And doesn't she remember that finally a light broke in upon me and I said it was all right—that I knew old Moses himself—and that he kept a clothing store in Market Street? And then she went to her ma and said she didn't know what would become of her uncle Sam—he was too dull to learn anything—ever! And I'm just as dull yet. Now I have no doubt her letter was spelled right, and was correct in all particulars—but then I had to read it according to my lights; and they being inferior, she ought to overlook the mistakes I make—especially, as it is not *my* fault that I wasn't born with good sense. I am sure she will detect an encouraging ray of intelligence in that last argument. . . .

I am waiting here, trying to rent a better office for Orion. I have got the refusal after next week of a room 16 x 50

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on first floor of a fire-proof brick—rent, eighteen hundred dollars a year. Don't know yet whether we can get it or not. If it is not rented before the week is up, we can.

I was sorry to hear that Dick was killed. I gave him his first lesson in the musket drill. We had half a dozen muskets in our office when it was over Isbell's Music Rooms.

I hope I am wearing the last white shirt that will embellish my person for many a day—for I do hope that I shall be out of Carson long before this reaches you.

Love to all.

Very Respectfully

SAM.

The "Annie" in this letter was his sister Pamela's little daughter; long years after, she would be the wife of Charles L. Webster, Mark Twain's publishing partner. "Dick" the reader may remember as Dick Hingham, of the Keokuk printing-office; he was killed in charging the works at Fort Donelson.

Clemens was back in Esmeralda when the next letter was written, and we begin now to get pictures of that cheerless mining-camp, and to know something of the alternate hopes and discouragements of the hunt for gold—the miner one day soaring on wings of hope, on the next becoming excited, irritable, profane. The names of new mines appear constantly and vanish almost at a touch, suggesting the fairy-like evanescence of their riches.

But a few of the letters here will best speak for themselves; not all of them are needed. It is perhaps unnecessary to say that there is no intentional humor in these documents.

To Orion Clemens, in Carson City:

ESMERALDA, *13th April, 1862.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Wasson got here night before last "from the wars." Tell Lockhart he is not wounded and not killed—is altogether unhurt. He says the whites left their stone fort before he and Lieut. Noble got there. A large amount of provisions and ammunition, which

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they left behind them, fell into the hands of the Indians. They had a pitched battle with the savages some fifty miles from the fort, in which Scott (sheriff) and another man was killed. This was the day before the soldiers came up with them. I mean Noble's men, and those under Cols. Evans and Mayfield, from Los Angeles. Evans assumed the chief command—and next morning the forces were divided into three parties, and marched against the enemy. Col. Mayfield was killed, and Sergeant Gillespie, also Noble's colonel was wounded. The California troops went back home, and Noble remained, to help drive the stock over here. And, as Cousin Sally Dillard says, this is all I know about the fight.

Work not yet begun on the H. and Derby—haven't seen it yet. It is still in the snow. Shall begin on it within 3 or 4 weeks—strike the ledge in July. Guess it is good —worth from $30 to $50 a foot in California.

Why didn't you send the "Live Yankee" deed—the very one I wanted? Have made no inquiries about it, much. Don't intend to until I get the deed. Send it along—by *mail*—d—n the Express—have to pay three times for all express matter; once in Carson and twice here. I don't expect to take the saddle-bags out of the express office. I paid twenty-five cts. for the Express deeds.

Man named Gebhart shot here yesterday while trying to defend a claim on Last Chance Hill. Expect he will die.

These mills here are not worth a d—n—except Clayton's—and it is not in full working trim yet.

Send me $40 or $50—by mail—immediately.

The Red Bird is probably good—can't work on the tunnel on account of snow. The "Pugh" I have thrown away—shan't re-locate it. It is nothing but bed-rock croppings—too much work to find the ledge, if there is one. Shan't record the "Farnum" until I know more about it—perhaps not at all.

"Governor" under the snow.

"Douglas" and "Red Bird" are both recorded.

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I have had opportunities to get into several ledges, but refused all but three—expect to back out of two of them.

Stir yourself as much as possible, and lay up $100 or $150, subject to my call. I go to work to-morrow, with pick and shovel. Something's got to come, by G—, before I let go, here.

Col. Youngs says you must rent Kinkead's room by all means—Government would rather pay $150 a month for your office than $75 for Gen. North's. Says you are playing your hand very badly, for either the Government's good opinion or anybody's else, in keeping your office in a shanty. Says put Gov. Nye in your place and he would have a stylish office, and no objections would ever be made, either. When old Col. Youngs talks this way, I think it time to get a fine office. I wish you would take that office, and fit it up handsomely, so that I can omit telling people that by this time you are handsomely located, when I know it is no such thing.

I am living with "Ratio Phillips." Send him one of those black portfolios—*by the stage*, and put a couple of pen-holders and a dozen steel pens in it.

If you should have occasion to dispose of the long desk before I return, don't forget to break open the middle drawer and take out my things. Envelop my black cloth coat in a newspaper and hang it in the back room.

Don't buy *anything* while I am here—but save up some money for me. Don't send any money home. I shall have your next quarter's salary spent before you get it, I think. I mean to make or break here within the next two or three months.

Yrs. Sam

The "wars" mentioned in the opening paragraph of this letter were incident to the trouble concerning the boundary line between California and Nevada. The trouble continued for some time, with occasional bloodshed. The next letter is an exultant one. There were few enough of this sort. We cannot pretend

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to keep track of the multiplicity of mines and shares which lure the gold-hunters, pecking away at the flinty ledges, usually in the snow. It has been necessary to abbreviate this letter, for much of it has lost all importance with the years, and is merely confusing. Hope is still high in the writer's heart, and confidence in his associates still unshaken. Later he was to lose faith in "Raish," whether with justice or not we cannot know now.

To Orion Clemens, in Carson City:

ESMERALDA, *May 11, 1862.*

MY DEAR BRO.,—To use a French expression I have "got my d—d satisfy" at last. Two years' time will make us capitalists, in spite of anything. Therefore, we need fret and fume, and worry and doubt no more, but just lie still and put up with privations for six months. Perhaps three months will "let us out." Then, if Government refuses to pay the rent on your new office we can do it ourselves. We have *got* to wait *six weeks*, anyhow, for a dividend, maybe longer—but that it *will* come there is no shadow of a doubt, I have got the thing sifted down to a dead moral certainty. I own one-eighth of the new "Monitor Ledge, Clemens Company," and money can't buy a foot of it; because I *know* it to contain our fortune. The ledge is six feet wide, and one needs no glass to see gold and silver in it. Phillips and I own one half of a segregated claim in the "Flyaway" discovery, and good interests in two extensions on it. We put men to work on our part of the discovery yesterday, and last night they brought us some fine specimens. Rock taken from ten feet below the surface on the other part of the discovery, *has* yielded $150.00 to the ton in the mill and we are at work 300 feet from their shaft.

May 12—Yours by the mail received last night. "Eighteen hundred feet in the C. T. Rice's Company!" Well, I am glad you did not accept of the 200 feet. Tell Rice to give it to some *poor* man.

But hereafter, when anybody holds up a glittering pros-

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pect before you, just argue in this wise, viz: That, if all spare change be devoted to working the "Monitor" and "Flyaway," 12 months, or 24 at furthest, will find all our earthly wishes satisfied, so far as money is concerned —and the more "feet" we have, the more anxiety we must bear—therefore, why not say "No—d—n your 'prospects,' I wait on a *sure* thing—and a man is less than a man, if he can't wait 2 years for a fortune?" When you and I came out here, we did not expect '63 or '64 to find us rich men—and if that proposition had been made, we would have accepted it gladly. Now, it *is* made.

Well, I am willing, now, that "Neary's tunnel," or anybody else's tunnel shall succeed. Some of them may beat us a few months, but we shall be on hand in the fullness of time, as sure as fate. I would hate to swap chances with any member of the "tribe"—in fact, I am so lost to all sense and reason as to be capable of refusing to trade "Flyaway" (with but 200 feet in the Company of four,) foot for foot for that splendid "Lady Washington," with its lists of capitalist proprietors, and its 35,000 feet of Priceless ground.

I wouldn't mind being in some of those Clear Creek claims, if I lived in Carson and we could spare the money. But I have struck my tent in Esmeralda, and I care for no mines but those which I can superintend myself. I am a citizen here now, and I am satisfied—although R. and I are strapped and we haven't three days' rations in the house.

Raish is looking anxiously for money and so am I. Send me whatever you can spare conveniently—I want it to work the Flyaway with. My fourth of that claim only cost me $50, (which isn't paid yet, though,) and I suppose I could sell it here in town for ten times that amount today, but I shall probably hold onto it till the cows come home. I shall work the "Monitor" and the other claims with my own hands. I prospected ¾ of a pound of "M," yesterday, and Raish reduced it with the blow-pipe, and got about ten or twelve cents in gold and silver, besides the other half of it which we spilt on the

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floor and *didn't* get. The specimen came from the croppings, but was a choice one, and showed much free gold to the naked eye.

Well, I like the corner up-stairs office amazingly—provided, it has one fine, large front room superbly carpeted, for the safe and a $150 desk, or such a matter—one handsome room amidships, less handsomely gotten up, perhaps, for records and consultations, and one good-sized bedroom and adjoining it a kitchen, neither of which latter can be entered by *anybody* but yourself—and finally, when one of the ledges begins to pay, the whole to be kept in parlor order by two likely contrabands at big wages, the same to be free of expense to the Government. You want the entire second story—no less room than you would have had in Harris and Co's. Make them fix for you *before* the 1st of July—for maybe you might want to "come out strong" on the 4th, you know.

No, the Post Office is all right and kept by a gentleman—but W. F. Express isn't. They charge 25 cts to express a letter *from* here, but I believe they have quit charging twice for letters that arrive prepaid.

The "Flyaway" specimen I sent you, (taken by myself from DeKay's shaft, 300 feet from where we are going to sink) cannot be called "choice," exactly—say something above medium, to be on the safe side. But I *have* seen *exceedingly* choice chunks from that shaft. My intention at first in sending the Antelope specimen was that you might see that it resembles the Monitor—but, come to think, a man can tell absolutely nothing about that without seeing both ledges themselves. I tried to break a handsome chunk from a huge piece of my darling Monitor which we brought from the croppings yesterday, but it all splintered up, and I send you the scraps. I call that "choice"—any d—d fool would. Don't ask if it has been assayed, for it hasn't. It don't need it. It is amply able to speak for itself. It is six feet wide on top, and traversed through and through with veins whose color proclaims their worth. What the devil does a man want with any

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more feet when he owns in the Flyaway and the invincible bomb-proof Monitor?

If I had anything more to say I have forgotten what it was, unless, perhaps, that I want a sum of money—anywhere from $20 to $150, as soon as possible.

Raish sends regards. He or I one will drop a line to the "Age" occasionally. I suppose you saw my letters in the "Enterprise."

Yr. Bro,

SAM

P. S. I suppose Pamela never will regain her health, but she could *improve* it by coming to California—provided the trip didn't kill her.

You see Bixby is on the flag-ship. He always was the best pilot on the Mississippi, and deserves his "posish." They have done a reckless thing, though, in putting Sam Bowen on the "Swan"—for if a bomb-shell happens to come his way, he will infallibly jump overboard.

Send me another package of those envelopes, per Bagley's coat pocket.

We see how anxious he was for his brother to make a good official showing. If a niggardly Government refused to provide decent quarters—no matter; the miners, with gold pouring in, would themselves pay for a suite "superbly carpeted," and all kept in order by "two likely contrabands"—that is to say, negroes. Samuel Clemens in those days believed in expansion and impressive surroundings. His brother, though also mining mad, was rather inclined to be penny wise in the matter of office luxury—not a bad idea, as it turned out.

Orion, by the way, was acquiring "feet" on his own account, and in one instance, at least, seems to have won his brother's commendation.

The *Enterprise* letters mentioned we shall presently hear of again.

To Orion Clemens, in Carson City:

ESMERALDA, *Sunday, May—, 1862.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Well, if you haven't "struck it rich—" that is, if the piece of rock you sent me came from

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a *bona fide ledge*—and it looks as if it did. If that is a ledge, and you own 200 feet in it, why, it's a big thing—and I have nothing more to say. If you have actually made something by helping to pay somebody's prospecting expenses it is a wonder of the first magnitude, and deserves to rank as such.

If that rock came from a well-defined ledge, that particular vein must be at least an inch wide, judging from this specimen, which is fully that thick.

When I came in the other evening, hungry and tired and ill-natured, and threw down my pick and shovel, Raish gave me your specimen—said Bagley brought it, and asked me if it were *cinnabar*. I examined it by the waning daylight, and took the specks of fine gold for sulphurets—wrote you I did not think much of it—and posted the letter immediately.

But as soon as I looked at it in the broad light of day, I saw my mistake. During the week, we have made three horns, got a blow-pipe, &c, and yesterday, all prepared, we prospected the "Mountain House." I broke the specimen in two, and found it full of fine gold inside. Then we washed out one-fourth of it, and got a noble prospect. This we reduced with the blow-pipe, and got about two cents (herewith enclosed) in pure gold.

As the fragment prospected weighed rather less than an ounce, this would give about $500 to the ton. We were eminently well satisfied. Therefore, hold on to the "Mountain House," for it is a "big thing." Touch it lightly, as far as money is concerned, though, for it is well to reserve the code of justice in the matter of quartz ledges—that is, consider them all (and their owners) guilty (of "shenanigan") until they are proved innocent.

P. S.—Monday—Ratio and I have bought one-half of a segregated claim in the original "Flyaway," for $100—$50 down. We haven't a cent in the house. *We two* will work the ledge, and have full control, and pay all expenses. If you can spare $100 conveniently, let me have it—or $50, anyhow, considering that I own *one fourth* of this, it

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is of course more valuable than one 1-7 of the "Mountain House," although not so rich. . . .

There is too much of a sameness in the letters of this period to use all of them. There are always new claims, and work done, apparently without system or continuance, hoping to uncover sudden boundless affluence.

In the next letter and the one following it we get a hint of an episode, or rather of two incidents which he *combined* into an episode in *Roughing It.* The story as told in that book is an account of what might have happened, rather than history. There was never really any money in the "blind lead" of the Wide West claim, except that which was sunk in it by unfortunate investors. Only extracts from these letters are given. The other portions are irrelevant and of slight value.

Extract from a letter to Orion Clemens, in Carson City:

1862.

Two or three of the old "Salina" company entered our hole on the Monitor yesterday morning, before our men got there, and took possession, armed with revolvers. And according to the d—d laws of this forever d—d country, nothing but the District Court (and there ain't any) can touch the matter, unless it assumes the shape of an infernal humbug which they call "forcible entry and detainer," and in order to bring that about, you must compel the jumpers to use personal violence toward you! We went up and demanded possession, and they refused. Said they were in the hole, armed and meant to die for it, if necessary.

I got in with them, and again demanded possession. They said I might stay in it as long as I pleased, and work but they would do the same. I asked one of our company to take my place in the hole, while I went to consult a lawyer. He did so. The lawyer said it was no go. They must offer some "force."

Our boys will try to be there first in the morning—in which case they may get possession and keep it. *Now*

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you understand the shooting scrape in which Gebhart was killed the other day. The Clemens Company—all of us—hate to resort to arms in this matter, and it will not be done until it becomes a forced hand—but I think that will be the end of it, never-the-less.

The mine relocated in this letter was not the "Wide West," but it furnished the proper incident. The only mention of the "Wide West" is found in a letter written in July.

Extract from a letter to Orion Clemens, in Carson City:

1862.

If I do not forget it, I will send you, per next mail, a pinch of decom. (decomposed rock) which I pinched with thumb and finger from "Wide West" ledge awhile ago. Raish and I have secured 200 out of a 400 ft. in it, which perhaps (the ledge, I mean) is a spur from the W. W.—our shaft is about 100 ft. from the W. W. shaft. In order to get in, we agreed to sink 30 ft. We have sub-let to another man for 50 ft., and we pay for powder and sharpening tools.

The "Wide West" claim was forfeited, but there is no evidence to show that Clemens and his partners were ever, except in fiction, "millionaires for ten days." The background, the local color, and the possibilities are all real enough, but Mark Twain's aim in this, as in most of his other reminiscent writing, was to arrange and adapt his facts to the needs of a good story.

The letters of this summer (1862) most of them bear evidence of waning confidence in mining as a source of fortune—the miner has now little faith in his own judgment, and none at all in that of his brother, who was without practical experience.

Letter to Orion Clemens, in Carson City:

ESMERALDA, *Thursday.*

MY DEAR BRO.,—Yours of the 17th, per express, just received. Part of it pleased me exceedingly, and part of

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it didn't. Concerning the letter, for instance: You have *promised* me that you would leave all mining matters, and everything involving an outlay of money, in my hands.

Sending a man fooling around the country after *ledges*, for God's sake! when there are hundreds of feet of them under my nose here, begging for owners, free of charge. *I don't want* any more feet, and I won't *touch* another foot—so you see, Orion, as far as any ledges of Perry's are concerned, (or *any other* except what I examine first with my own eyes,) I freely yield my right to share ownership with you.

The balance of your letter, I say, pleases me exceedingly. Especially that about the H. and D. being worth from $30 to $50 in Cal. It pleases me because, if the ledges prove to be worthless, it will be a pleasant reflection to know that others were beaten worse than ourselves. Raish sold a man 30 feet, yesterday, at $20 a foot, although I was present at the sale, and told the man the ground wasn't worth a d—n. He said he had been hankering after a few feet in the H. and D. for a long time, and he had got them at last, and he couldn't help thinking he had secured a good thing. We went and looked at the ledges, and both of them acknowledged that there was nothing in them but good "indications." Yet the owners in the H. and D. will part with anything else sooner than with feet in these ledges. Well, the work goes slowly—*very* slowly on, in the tunnel, and we'll strike it some day. *But*—if we "strike it rich,"—I've lost my guess, that's all. I expect that the way it got so high in Cal. was, that Raish's brother, over there was offered $750.00 for 20 feet of it, and he refused. . . .

Couldn't go on the hill today. It snowed. It *always* snows here, I expect.

Don't you suppose they have pretty much quit writing, at home?

When you receive your next ¼ yr's salary, don't send any of it here until after you have told me you have got it. Remember this. I am afraid of that H. and D.

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They have struck the ledge in the Live Yankee tunnel, and I told the President, Mr. Allen, that it wasn't as good as the croppings. He said that was true enough, but they would hang to it until it *did* prove rich. He is much of a gentleman, that man Allen.

And ask Gaslerie why the devil he don't send along my commission as Deputy Sheriff. The fact of my being in California, and out of his country, wouldn't amount to a d—n with *me*, in the performance of my official duties.

I have nothing to report, at present, except that I shall find out all I want to know about this locality before I leave it.

How do the Records pay?

Yr. Bro.

SAM.

In one of the foregoing letters—the one dated May 11—there is a reference to the writer's "Enterprise Letters." Sometimes, during idle days in the camp, the miner had followed old literary impulses and written an occasional burlesque sketch, which he had signed "Josh," and sent to the *Territorial Enterprise*, at Virginia City.[1] The rough, vigorous humor of these had attracted some attention, and Orion, pleased with any measure of success that might come to his brother, had allowed the authorship of them to become known. When, in July, the financial situation became desperate, the Esmeralda miner was moved to turn to literature for relief. But we will let him present the situation himself.

To Orion Clemens, in Carson City:

ESMERALDA, *July 23d, 1862.*

MY DEAR BRO.,—No, I don't own a foot in the "Johnson" ledge—I will tell the story some day in a more intelligible manner than Tom has told it. You needn't take the trouble to deny Tom's version, though. I own

[1] One contribution was sent to a Keokuk paper, *The Gate City*, and a letter written by Mrs. Jane Clemens at the time would indicate that Mark Twain's mother did not always approve of her son's literary efforts. She hopes that he will do better, and some time write something "that his kin will be proud of."

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25 feet (1-16) of the 1st east ex. on it—and Johnson himself has contracted to find the ledge for 100 feet. Contract signed yesterday. But as the ledge will be difficult to find he is allowed six months to find it in. An eighteenth of the Ophir was a fortune to John D. Winters—and the Ophir can't beat the Johnson any. . . .

My debts are greater than I thought for; I bought $25 worth of clothing, and sent $25 to Higbie, in the cement diggings. I owe about $45 or $50, and have got about $45 in my pocket. But how in the h—l I am going to live on something over $100 until October or November, is singular. The fact is, I must have something to do, and that *shortly*, too. . . .

Now write to the Sacramento Union folks, or to Marsh, and tell them I'll write as many letters a week as they want, for $10 a week—my board must be paid. Tell them I have corresponded with the N. Orleans Crescent, and other papers—and the Enterprise. California is full of people who have interests here, and it's d—d seldom they hear from this country. I can't write a specimen letter—now, at any rate—I'd rather undertake to write a Greek poem. Tell 'em the mail and express leave three times a week, and it costs from 25 to 50 cents to send letters by the blasted express. If they want letters from here, who'll run from morning till night collecting materials cheaper. I'll write a short letter twice a week, for the present, for the "Age," for $5 per week. Now it has been a long time since I couldn't make my own living, and it shall be a long time before I loaf another year. . . .

If I get the other 25 feet in the Johnson ex., I shan't care a d—n. I'll be willing to curse awhile and wait. And if I can't move the bowels of those hills this fall, I will come up and clerk for you until I get money enough to go over the mountains for the winter.

Yr. Bro.

SAM.

The *Territorial Enterprise* at Virginia City was at this time owned by Joseph T. Goodman, who had bought it on the eve

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of the great Comstock silver-mining boom, and from a struggling, starving sheet had converted it into one of the most important —certainly the most picturesque—papers on the coast. The sketches which the Esmeralda miner had written over the name of "Josh" fitted into it exactly, and when a young man named Barstow, in the business office, urged Goodman to invite "Josh" to join their staff, the *Enterprise* owner readily fell in with the idea. Among a lot of mining matters of no special interest, Clemens, July 30th, wrote his brother: "Barstow has offered me the post as local reporter for the *Enterprise* at $25 a week, and I have written him that I will let him know next mail, if possible."

In *Roughing It* we are told that the miner eagerly accepted the proposition to come to Virginia City, but the letters tell a different story. Mark Twain was never one to abandon any undertaking easily. His unwillingness to surrender in a lost cause would cost him more than one fortune in the years to come. A week following the date of the foregoing he was still undecided.

To Orion Clemens, in Carson City:

ESMERALDA, *Aug. 7, 1862.*

MY DEAR BRO,—Barstow wrote that if I wanted the place I could have it. I wrote him that I guessed I would take it, and asked him how long before I must come up there. I have not heard from him since.

Now, I shall leave at mid-night tonight, alone and on foot for a walk of 60 or 70 miles through a totally uninhabited country, and it is barely possible that mail facilities may prove infernally "slow" during the few weeks I expect to spend out there. But do you write Barstow that I have left here for a week or so, and in case he should want me he must write me here, or let me know through you.

The Contractors say they will strike the Fresno next week. After fooling with those assayers a week, they concluded not to buy "Mr. Flower" at $50, although they would have given five times the sum for it four months ago. So I have made out a deed for one half of all Johnny's ground and acknowledged and left in Judge F. K. Becktel's

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hands, and if Judge Turner wants it he must write to Becktel and pay him his Notary fee of $1.50. I would have paid that fee myself, but I want money now as I leave town tonight. However, if you think it isn't right, you can pay the fee to Judge Turner yourself.

Hang to your money now. I may want some when I get back. . . .

See that you keep out of debt—to *anybody*. Bully for B.! Write him that I would write him myself, but I am to take a walk tonight and haven't time. Tell him to bring his family out with him. He can rely upon what I say—and *I* say the land has lost its ancient desolate appearance; the rose and the oleander have taken the place of the departed sage-bush; a rich black loam, garnished with moss, and flowers, and the greenest of grass, smiles to Heaven from the vanished sand-plains; the "endless snows" have all disappeared, and in their stead, or to repay us for their loss, the mountains rear their billowy heads aloft, crowned with a fadeless and eternal verdure; birds, and fountains, and trees—tropical trees —everywhere!—and the poet dreamt of Nevada when he wrote:

"and Sharon waves, in solemn praise,
Her silent groves of palm."

and today the royal Raven listens in a dreamy stupor to the songs of the thrush and the nightingale and the canary—and shudders when the gaudy-plumaged birds of the distant South sweep by him to the orange groves of Carson. Tell him he wouldn't recognize the d—d country. He should bring his family by all means.

I intended to write home, but I haven't done it.

Yr. Bro.

SAM.

In this letter we realize that he had gone into the wilderness to reflect—to get a perspective on the situation. He was a great walker in those days, and sometimes with Higbie, sometimes alone, made long excursions. One such is recorded in *Roughing It*, the trip to Mono Lake. We have no means of

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knowing where his seventy-mile tour led him now, but it is clear that he still had not reached a decision on his return. Indeed, we gather that he is inclined to keep up the battle among the barren Esmeralda hills.

Last mining letter; written to Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

ESMERALDA, CAL., *Aug. 15, 1862.*

MY DEAR SISTER,—I mailed a letter to you and Ma this morning, but since then I have received yours to Orion and me. Therefore, I must answer right away, else I may leave town without doing it at all. What in thunder are pilot's wages to me? which question, I beg humbly to observe, is of a *general* nature, and not discharged particularly at you. But it is singular, isn't it, that such a matter should interest Orion, when it is of no earthly consequence to me? I never have *once* thought of returning home to go on the river again, and I never expect to do any more piloting at any price. My livelihood must be made in this country—and if I have to wait longer than I expected, let it be so—I have no fear of failure. You know I have extravagant hopes, for Orion tells you everything which he ought to keep to himself—but it's his nature to do that sort of thing, and I let him alone. I did think for awhile of going home this fall—but when I found that that was and had been the cherished intention and the darling aspiration every year, of these old care-worn Californians for twelve weary years—I felt a little uncomfortable, but I stole a march on Disappointment and said I would *not* go home this fall. I will spend the winter in San Francisco, if possible. Do not tell any one that I had any idea of piloting again at present—for it is all a mistake. This country suits me, and —it *shall* suit me, whether or no. . . .

Dan Twing and I and Dan's dog, "cabin" together—and will continue to do so for awhile—until I leave for—

The mansion is 10x12, with a "domestic" roof. Yesterday it rained—the first shower for five months. "Do-

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mestic," it appears to me, is not water-proof. We went outside to keep from getting wet. Dan makes the bed when it is his turn to do it—and when it is my turn, I don't, you know. The dog is not a good hunter, and he isn't worth shucks to watch—but he scratches up the dirt floor of the cabin, and catches flies, and makes himself generally useful in the way of washing dishes. Dan gets up first in the morning and makes a fire—and I get up last and sit by it, while he cooks breakfast. We have a cold lunch at noon, and I cook supper—very much against my will. However, one must have *one* good meal a day, and if I were to live on Dan's abominable cookery, I should lose my appetite, you know. Dan attended Dr. Chorpenning's funeral yesterday, and he felt as though he ought to wear a white shirt—and we had a jolly good time finding such an article. We turned over all our traps, and he found one at last—but I shall always think it was suffering from yellow fever. He also found an old black coat, greasy, and wrinkled to that degree that it appeared to have been quilted at some time or other. In this gorgeous costume he attended the funeral. And when he returned, his own dog drove him away from the cabin, not recognizing him. This is true.

You would not like to live in a country where flour was $40 a barrel? Very well, then, I suppose you would not like to live here, where flour was $100 a barrel when I first came here. And shortly afterwards, it couldn't be had at any price—and for one month the people lived on barley, beans and beef—and nothing beside. Oh, no—we didn't luxuriate then! Perhaps not. But we said wise and severe things about the vanity and wickedness of high living. We preached our doctrine and practised it. Which course I respectfully recommend to the clergymen of St. Louis.

Where is Beack Jolly?[1] and Bixby?

Your Brother

SAM.

[1] A pilot.

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IV

LETTERS 1863–64. "MARK TWAIN." COMSTOCK JOURNALISM. ARTEMUS WARD

THERE is a long hiatus in the correspondence here. For a space of many months there is but one letter to continue the story. Others were written, of course, but for some reason they have not survived. It was about the end of August (1862) when the miner finally abandoned the struggle, and with his pack on his shoulders walked the one and thirty miles over the mountains to Virginia City, arriving dusty, lame, and travel-stained to claim at last his rightful inheritance. At the *Enterprise* office he was welcomed, and in a brief time entered into his own. Goodman, the proprietor, himself a man of great ability, had surrounded himself with a group of gay-hearted fellows, whose fresh, wild way of writing delighted the Comstock pioneers far more than any sober presentation of mere news. Samuel Clemens fitted exactly into this group. By the end of the year he had become a leader of it. When he asked to be allowed to report the coming Carson legislature, Goodman consented, realizing that while Clemens knew nothing of parliamentary procedure, he would at least make the letters picturesque.

It was in the midst of this work that he adopted the name which he was to make famous throughout the world. The story of its adoption has been fully told elsewhere and need not be repeated here.[1]

"Mark Twain" was first signed to a Carson letter, February 2, 1863, and from that time was attached to all of Samuel Clemens's work. The letters had already been widely copied, and the name now which gave them personality quickly obtained vogue. It was attached to himself as well as to the

[1] See *Mark Twain: A Biography*, by the same author; Chapter XL.

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letters; heretofore he had been called Sam or Clemens, now he became almost universally Mark Twain and Mark.

This early period of Mark Twain's journalism is full of delicious history, but we are permitted here to retell only such of it as will supply connection to the infrequent letters. He wrote home briefly in February, but the letter contained nothing worth preserving. Then two months later he gives us at least a hint of his employment.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

VIRGINIA, *April 11, 1863.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—It is very late at night, and I am writing in my room, which is not quite as large or as nice as the one I had at home. My board, washing and lodging cost me seventy-five dollars a month.

I have just received your letter, Ma, from Carson—the one in which you doubt my veracity about the statements I made in a letter to you. That's right. I don't recollect what the statements were, but I suppose they were mining statistics. I have just finished writing up my report for the morning paper, and giving the Unreliable a column of advice about how to conduct himself in church, and now I will tell you a few more lies, while my hand is in. For instance, some of the boys made me a present of fifty feet in the East India G. and S. M. Company ten days ago. I was offered ninety-five dollars a foot for it, yesterday, in gold. *I refused it*—not because I think the claim is worth a cent for I *don't* but because I had a curiosity to see how high it would go, before people find out how worthless it is. Besides, what if one mining claim *does* fool me? I have got plenty more. I am not in a particular hurry to get rich. I suppose I couldn't well help getting rich here some time or other, whether I wanted to or not. You folks do not believe in Nevada, and I am glad you don't. Just keep on thinking so.

I was at the Gould and Curry mine, the other day, and they had two or three tons of choice rock piled up, which was valued at $20,000 a ton. I gathered up a hat-full of

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chunks, on account of their beauty as specimens—they don't let everybody supply themselves so liberally. I send Mr. Moffett a little specimen of it for his cabinet. If you don't know what the white stuff on it is, I must inform you that it is purer silver than the minted coin. There is about as much gold in it as there is silver, but it is not visible. I will explain to you some day how to detect it.

Pamela, you wouldn't do for a local reporter—because you don't appreciate the interest that attaches to *names*. An item is of no use unless it speaks of some *person*, and not then, unless that person's *name* is distinctly mentioned. The most interesting letter one can write, to an absent friend, is one that treats of *persons* he has been acquainted with rather than the public events of the day. Now you speak of a young lady who wrote to Hollie Benson that she had seen me, and you didn't mention her *name*. It was just a mere chance that I ever guessed who she was—but I did, finally, though I don't remember her name, now. I was introduced to her in San Francisco by Hon. A. B. Paul, and saw her afterwards in Gold Hill. They were a very pleasant lot of girls—she and her sisters.

P. S. I have just heard five pistol shots down street—as such things are in my line, I will go and see about it.

P. S. No 2—5 A.M.—The pistol did its work well—one man—a Jackson County Missourian, shot two of my friends, (police officers,) through the heart—both died within three minutes. Murderer's name is John Campbell.

The "Unreliable" of this letter was a rival reporter on whom Mark Twain had conferred this name during the legislative session. His real name was Rice, and he had undertaken to criticize Clemens's reports. The brisk reply that Rice's letters concealed with a show of parliamentary knowledge a "festering mass of misstatements the author of whom should be properly termed the 'Unreliable,'" fixed that name upon him for life. This burlesque warfare delighted the frontier and it did not

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interfere with friendship. Clemens and Rice were constant associates, though continually firing squibs at each other in their respective papers—a form of personal journalism much in vogue on the Comstock.

In the next letter we find these two journalistic "blades" enjoying themselves together in the coast metropolis. This letter is labeled "No. 2," meaning, probably, the second from San Francisco, but No. 1 has disappeared, and even No. 2 is incomplete.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

No. 2— $20.00 Enclosed)

LICK HOUSE, S. F., *June 1, '63.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—The Unreliable and myself are still here, and still enjoying ourselves. I suppose I know at least a thousand people here—a great many of them citizens of San Francisco, but the majority belonging in Washoe—and when I go down Montgomery street, shaking hands with Tom, Dick and Harry, it is just like being in Main street in Hannibal and meeting the old familiar faces. I *do hate* to go back to Washoe. We fag ourselves completely out every day, and go to sleep without rocking, every night. We dine out and we lunch out, and we eat, drink and are happy—as it were. After breakfast, I don't often see the hotel again until midnight—or after. I am going to the Dickens mighty fast. I know a regular village of families here in the house, but I never have time to call on them. Thunder! we'll know a little more about this town, before we leave, than some of the people who live in it. We take trips across the Bay to Oakland, and down to San Leandro, and Alameda, and those places, and we go out to the Willows, and Hayes Park, and Fort Point, and up to Benicia; and yesterday we were invited out on a yachting excursion, and had a sail in the fastest yacht on the Pacific Coast. Rice says: "Oh, no—*we* are not having any fun, Mark—Oh, no, I reckon not—it's somebody else—it's

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probably the 'gentleman in the wagon'!" (popular slang phrase.) When I invite Rice to the Lick House to dinner, the proprietors send us champagne and claret, and then we *do* put on the most disgusting airs. Rice says our calibre is too light—we can't stand it to be noticed!

I rode down with a gentleman to the Ocean House, the other day, to see the sea horses, and also to listen to the roar of the surf, and watch the ships drifting about, here, and there, and far away at sea. When I stood on the beach and let the surf wet my feet, I recollected doing the same thing on the shores of the Atlantic—and then I had a proper appreciation of the vastness of this country—for I had traveled from ocean to ocean across it.

(Remainder missing.)

Not far from Virginia City there are some warm springs that constantly send up jets of steam through fissures in the mountain-side. The place was a health resort, and Clemens, always subject to bronchial colds, now and again retired there for a cure.

A letter written in the late summer—a gay, youthful document—belongs to one of these periods of convalescence.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, *August 19, '63.*

No. 12—$20 enclosed.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—Ma, you have given my vanity a deadly thrust. Behold, I am prone to boast of having the widest reputation, as a local editor, of any man on the Pacific coast, and you gravely come forward and tell me "if I work hard and attend closely to my business, I may aspire to a place on a big San Francisco daily, some day." There's a comment on human vanity for you! Why, blast it, I was under the impression that I could get such a situation as that any time I asked for it. But I don't want it. No paper in the United States can afford to pay me what my place on the "Enterprise"

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is worth. If I were not naturally a lazy, idle, good-for-nothing vagabond, I could make it pay me $20,000 a year. But I don't suppose I shall ever be any account. I lead an easy life, though, and I don't care a cent whether school keeps or not. Everybody knows me, and I fare like a prince wherever I go, be it on this side of the mountains or the other. And I am proud to say I am the most conceited ass in the Territory.

You think that picture looks old? Well, I can't help it—in reality I am not as old as I was when I was eighteen.

I took a desperate cold more than a week ago, and I seduced Wilson (a Missouri boy, reporter of the Daily Union,) from his labors, and we went over to Lake Bigler. But I failed to cure my cold. I found the "Lake House" crowded with the wealth and fashion of Virginia, and I could not resist the temptation to take a hand in all the fun going. Those Virginians—men and women both—are a stirring set, and I found if I went with them on all their eternal excursions, I should bring the consumption home with me—so I left, day before yesterday, and came back into the Territory again. A lot of them had purchased a site for a town on the Lake shore, and they gave me a lot. When you come out, I'll build you a house on it. The Lake seems more supernaturally beautiful now, than ever. It is the masterpiece of the Creation.

The hotel here at the Springs is not so much crowded as usual, and I am having a very comfortable time of it. The hot, white steam puffs up out of fissures in the earth like the jets that come from a steam-boat's 'scape pipes, and it makes a boiling, surging noise like a steam-boat, too—hence the name. We put eggs in a handkerchief and dip them in the springs—they "soft boil" in 2 minutes, and boil as hard as a rock in 4 minutes. These fissures extend more than a quarter of a mile, and the long line of steam columns looks very pretty. A large bath house is built over one of the springs, and we go in it and steam ourselves as long as we can stand it, and then come out and take a cold shower bath. You get baths, board

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and lodging, all for $25 a week—cheaper than living in Virginia without baths. . . .

Yrs aft

MARK.

It was now the autumn of 1863. Mark Twain was twenty-eight years old. On the Coast he had established a reputation as a gaily original newspaper writer. Thus far, however, he had absolutely no literary standing, nor is there any evidence that he had literary ambitions; his work was unformed, uncultivated—all of which seems strange, now, when we realize that somewhere behind lay the substance of immortality. Rudyard Kipling at twenty-eight had done his greatest work.

Even Joseph Goodman, who had a fine literary perception and a deep knowledge of men, intimately associated with Mark Twain as he was, received at this time no hint of his greater powers. Another man on the staff of the *Enterprise*, William Wright, who called himself "Dan de Quille," a graceful humorist, gave far more promise, Goodman thought, of future distinction.

It was Artemus Ward who first suspected the value of Mark Twain's gifts, and urged him to some more important use of them. Artemus in the course of a transcontinental lecture tour, stopped in Virginia City, and naturally found congenial society on the *Enterprise* staff. He had intended remaining but a few days, but lingered three weeks, a period of continuous celebration, closing only with the holiday season. During one night of final festivities, Ward slipped away and gave a performance on his own account. His letter to Mark Twain, from Austin, Nevada, written a day or two later, is most characteristic.

Artemus Ward's letter to Mark Twain:

AUSTIN, *Jan. 1, '64.*

MY DEAREST LOVE,—I arrived here yesterday a.m. at 2 o'clock. It is a wild, untamable place, full of lion-hearted boys. I speak tonight. See small bills.

Why did you not go with me and save me that night? —I mean the night I left you after that dinner party. I went and got drunker, beating, I may say, Alexander the Great, in his most drinkinist days, and I blackened my

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face at the Melodeon, and made a gibbering, idiotic speech. God-dam it! I suppose the Union will have it. But let it go. I shall always remember Virginia as a bright spot in my existence, as all others must or rather cannot be, as it were.

Love to Jo. Goodman and Dan. I shall write soon, a powerfully convincing note to my friends of "The Mercury." Your notice, by the way, did much good here, as it doubtlessly will elsewhere. The miscreants of the Union will be batted in the snout if they ever dare pollute this rapidly rising city with their loathsome presence.

Some of the finest intellects in the world have been blunted by liquor.

Do not, sir—do not flatter yourself that you are the only chastely-humorous writer onto the Pacific slopes.

Good-bye, old boy—and God bless you! The matter of which I spoke to you so earnestly shall be just as earnestly attended to—and again with very many warm regards for Jo. and Dan., and regards to many of the good friends we met. I am Faithfully, gratefully yours,

ARTEMUS WARD.

The *Union* which Ward mentions was the rival Virginia City paper; the *Mercury* was the New York *Sunday Mercury*, to which he had urged Mark Twain to contribute. Ward wrote a second letter, after a siege of illness at Salt Lake City. He was a frail creature, and three years later, in London, died of consumption. His genius and encouragement undoubtedly exerted an influence upon Mark Twain. Ward's second letter here follows.

Artemus Ward to S. L. Clemens:

SALT LAKE CITY, *Jan. 21, '64.*

MY DEAR MARK,—I have been dangerously ill for the past two weeks here, of congestive fever. Very grave fears were for a time entertained of my recovery, but happily the malady is gone, though leaving me very, very weak. I hope to be able to resume my journey in a

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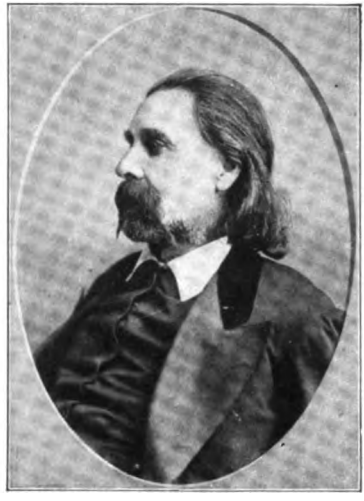
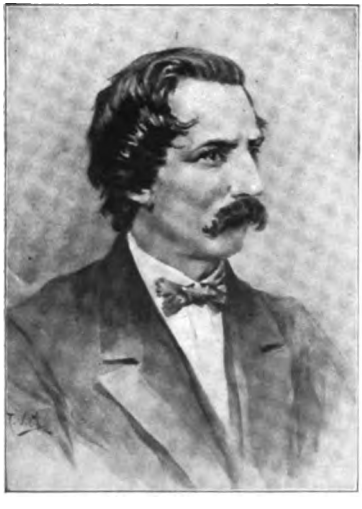
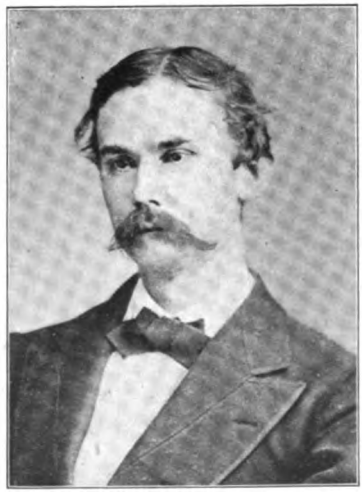
BRET HARTE



JOSH BILLINGS



ARTEMUS WARD



JOHN HAY

A GROUP OF MARK TWAIN'S EARLY FRIENDS

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week or so. I think I shall speak in the Theater here, which is one of the finest establishments of the kind in America.

The Saints have been wonderfully kind to me, I could not have been better or more tenderly nursed at home —God bless them!

I am still exceedingly weak—can't write any more. Love to Jo and Dan, and all the rest. Write me at St. Louis.

Always yours,

ARTEMUS WARD.

If one could only have Mark Twain's letters in reply to these! but they have vanished and are probably long since dust. A letter which he wrote to his mother assures us that he undertook to follow Ward's advice. He was not ready, however, for serious literary effort. The article, sent to the *Mercury*, was distinctly of the Comstock variety; it was accepted, but it apparently made no impression, and he did not follow it up.

For one thing, he was just then too busy reporting the Legislature at Carson City and responding to social demands. From having been a scarcely considered unit during the early days of his arrival in Carson Mark Twain had attained a high degree of importance in the little Nevada capital. In the Legislature he was a power; as correspondent for the *Enterprise* he was feared and respected as well as admired. His humor, his satire, and his fearlessness were dreaded weapons.

Also, he was of extraordinary popularity. Orion's wife, with her little daughter, Jennie, had come out from the States. The Governor of Nevada had no household in Carson City, and was generally absent. Orion Clemens reigned in his stead, and indeed was usually addressed as "Governor" Clemens. His home became the social center of the capital, and his brilliant brother its chief ornament. From the roughest of miners of a year before he had become, once more, almost a dandy in dress, and no occasion was complete without him. When the two Houses of the Legislature assembled, in January, 1864, a burlesque Third House was organized and proposed to hold a session, as a church benefit. After very brief consideration it was decided to select Mark Twain to preside at this Third House

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assembly under the title of "Governor," and a letter of invitation was addressed to him. His reply to it follows:

To S. Pixley and G. A. Sears, Trustees:

CARSON CITY, *January 23, 1864.*

GENTLEMEN,—Certainly. If the public can find anything in a grave state paper worth paying a dollar for, I am willing that they should pay that amount, or any other; and although I am not a very dusty Christian myself, I take an absorbing interest in religious affairs, and would willingly inflict my annual message upon the Church itself if it might derive benefit thereby. You can charge what you please; I promise the public no amusement, but I do promise a reasonable amount of instruction. I am responsible to the Third House only, and I hope to be permitted to make it exceedingly warm for that body, without caring whether the sympathies of the public and the Church be enlisted in their favor, and against myself, or not.

Respectfully,

MARK TWAIN.

There is a quality in this letter more suggestive of the later Mark Twain than anything that has preceded it. His Third House address, unfortunately, has not been preserved, but those who heard it regarded it as a classic. It probably abounded in humor of the frontier sort—unsparing ridicule of the Governor, the Legislature, and individual citizens. It was all taken in good part, of course, and as a recognition of his success he received a gold watch, with the case properly inscribed to "The Governor of the Third House." This was really his first public appearance in a field in which he was destined to achieve very great fame.

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V

LETTERS 1864–66. SAN FRANCISCO AND HAWAII

LIFE on the Comstock came to an end for Mark Twain in May, 1864. It was the time of The Flour Sack Sanitary Fund, the story of which he has told in *Roughing It*. He does not, however, refer to the troubles which this special fund brought upon himself. Coming into the *Enterprise* office one night, after a gay day of "Fund" celebration, Clemens wrote, for next day's paper, a paragraph intended to be merely playful, but which proved highly offending to certain ladies concerned with the flour-sack enterprise. No files of the paper exist today, so we cannot judge of the quality of humor that stirred up trouble.

The trouble, however, was genuine enough, Virginia's rival paper seized upon the chance to humiliate its enemy, and presently words were passed back and forth until nothing was left to write but a challenge. The story of this duel, which did not come off, has been quite fully told elsewhere, both by Mark Twain and the present writer; but the following letter—a revelation of his inner feelings in the matter of his offense—has never before been published.

To Mrs. Cutler, in Carson City:

VIRGINIA, *May 23rd, 1864.*

MRS. W. K. CUTLER:

MADAM,—I address a lady in every sense of the term. Mrs. Clemens has informed me of everything that has occurred in Carson in connection with that unfortunate item of mine about the Sanitary Funds accruing from the ball, and from what I can understand, you are almost the

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only lady in your city who has understood the circumstances under which my fault was committed, or who has shown any disposition to be lenient with me. Had the note of the ladies been properly worded, I would have published an ample apology instantly—and possibly I might even have done so anyhow, had that note arrived at any other time—but it came at a moment when I was in the midst of what ought to have been a deadly quarrel with the publishers of the Union, and I could not come out and make public apologies to any one at such a time. It is bad policy to do it even now (as challenges have already passed between myself and a proprietor of the Union, and the matter is still in abeyance,) but I suppose I had better say a word or two to show the ladies that I did not wilfully and maliciously do them a wrong.

But my chief object, Mrs. Cutler, in writing you this note (and you will pardon the liberty I have taken,) was to thank you very kindly and sincerely for the consideration you have shown me in this matter, and for your continued friendship for Mollie while others are disposed to withdraw theirs on account of a fault for which I alone am responsible.

Very truly yours,
SAM. L. CLEMENS.

The matter did not end with the failure of the duel. A very strict law had just been passed, making it a felony even to send or accept a challenge. Clemens, on the whole, rather tired of Virginia City and Carson, thought it a good time to go across the mountains to San Francisco. With Steve Gillis, a printer, of whom he was very fond—an inveterate joker, who had been more than half responsible for the proposed duel, and was to have served as his second—he took the stage one morning, and in due time was in the California metropolis, at work on the *Morning Call*.

Clemens had been several times in San Francisco, and loved the place. We have no letter of that summer, the first being dated several months after his arrival. He was still working on the *Call* when it was written, and contributing literary articles to

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the *Californian*, of which Bret Harte, unknown to fame, was editor. Harte had his office just above the rooms of the *Call*, and he and Clemens were good friends. San Francisco had a real literary group that, for a time at least, centered around the offices of the *Golden Era*. In a letter that follows Clemens would seem to have scorned this publication, but he was a frequent contributor to it at one period. Joaquin Miller was of this band of literary pioneers; also Prentice Mulford, Charles Warren Stoddard, Fitzhugh Ludlow, and Orpheus C. Kerr.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

Sept. 25, 1864.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—You can see by my picture that this superb climate agrees with me. And it ought, after living where I was never out of sight of snow peaks twenty-four hours during three years. Here we have neither snow nor cold weather; fires are never lighted, and yet summer clothes are never worn—you wear spring clothing the year round.

Steve Gillis, who has been my comrade for two years, and who came down here with me, is to be married, in a week or two, to a very pretty girl worth $130,000 in her own right—and then I shall be alone again, until they build a house, which they will do shortly.

We have been here only four months, yet we have changed our lodgings five times, and our hotel twice. We are very comfortably fixed where we are, now, and have no fault to find with the rooms or with the people—we are the only lodgers in a well-to-do private family, with one grown daughter and a piano in the parlor adjoining our room. But I need a change, and must move again. I have taken rooms further down the street. I shall stay in this little quiet street, because it is full of gardens and shrubbery, and there are none but dwelling houses in it.

I am taking life easy, now, and I mean to keep it up for awhile. I don't work at night any more. I told the "Call" folks to pay me $25 a week and let me work only

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in daylight. So I get up at ten every morning, and quit work at five or six in the afternoon. You ask if I work for greenbacks? Hardly. What do you suppose I could do with greenbacks here?

I have engaged to write for the new literary paper—the "Californian"—same pay I used to receive on the "Golden Era"—one article a week, fifty dollars a month. I quit the "Era," long ago. It wasn't high-toned enough. The "Californian" circulates among the highest class of the community, and is the best weekly literary paper in the United States—and I suppose I ought to know.

I work as I always did—by fits and starts. I wrote two articles last night for the Californian, so that lets me out for two weeks. That would be about seventy-five dollars, in greenbacks, wouldn't it?

Been down to San Jose (generally pronounced Sannoz*ay*—emphasis on last syllable)—today fifty miles from here, by railroad. Town of 6,000 inhabitants, buried in flowers and shrubbery. The climate is finer than ours here, because it is not so close to the ocean, and is protected from the winds by the coast range.

I had an invitation today, to go down on an excursion to San Luis Obispo, and from thence to the city of Mexico, to be gone six or eight weeks, or possibly longer, but I could not accept, on account of my contract to act as chief mourner or groomsman at Steve's wedding.

I have triumphed. They refused me and other reporters some information at a branch of the Coroner's office—Massey's undertaker establishment, a few weeks ago. I published the wickedest article on them I ever wrote in my life, and you can rest assured we got all the information we wanted after that.

By the new census, San Francisco has a population of 130,000. They don't count the hordes of Chinamen.

Yrs affly

SAM.

I send a picture for Annie, and one for Aunt Ella—that is, if she will have it.

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Relations with the *Call* ceased before the end of the year, though not in the manner described in *Roughing It*. Mark Twain loved to make fiction of his mishaps, and to show himself always in a bad light. As a matter of fact, he left the *Call* with great willingness, and began immediately contributing a daily letter to the *Enterprise*, which brought him a satisfactory financial return.

In the biographical sketch with which this volume opens, and more extendedly elsewhere, has been told the story of the trouble growing out of the *Enterprise* letters, and of Mark Twain's sojourn with James Gillis in the Tuolumne Hills. Also how, in the frowsy hotel at Angel's Camp, he heard the frog anecdote that would become the corner-stone of his fame. There are no letters of this period—only some note-book entries. It is probable that he did not write home, believing, no doubt, that he had very little to say.

For more than a year there is not a line that has survived. Yet it had been an important year; the jumping frog story, published in New York, had been reprinted East and West, and laughed over in at least a million homes. Fame had not come to him, but it was on the way.

Yet his outlook seems not to have been a hopeful one.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

SAN FRANCISCO, *Jan. 20, 1866.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I do not know what to write; my life is so uneventful. I wish I was back there piloting up and down the river again. Verily, all is vanity and little worth—save piloting.

To think that, after writing many an article a man might be excused for thinking tolerably good, those New York people should single out a villainous backwoods sketch to compliment me on!—"Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog"—a squib which would never have been written but to please Artemus Ward, and then it reached New York too late to appear in his book.

But no matter. His book was a wretchedly poor one, generally speaking, and it could be no credit to either of us to appear between its covers.

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This paragraph is from the New York correspondence of the San Francisco *Alta:*

(Clipping pasted in.)

"Mark Twain's story in the *Saturday Press* of November 18th, called 'Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog,' has set all New York in a roar, and he may be said to have made his mark. I have been asked fifty times about it and its author, and the papers are copying it far and near. It is voted the best thing of the day. Cannot the Californian afford to keep Mark all to itself? It should not let him scintillate so widely without first being filtered through the California press."

The New York publishing house of Carleton & Co. gave the sketch to the *Saturday Press* when they found it was too late for the book.

Though I am generally placed at the head of my breed of scribblers in this part of the country, the place properly belongs to Bret Harte, I think, though he denies it, along with the rest. He wants me to club a lot of old sketches together with a lot of his, and publish a book. I wouldn't do it, only he agrees to take all the trouble. But I want to know whether we are going to make anything out of it, first. However, he has written to a New York publisher, and if we are offered a bargain that will pay for a month's labor we will go to work and prepare the volume for the press.

Yours affy,

SAM.

Bret Harte and Clemens had by this time quit the *Californian*, expecting to contribute to Eastern periodicals. Clemens, however, was not yet through with Coast journalism. There was much interest just at this time in the Sandwich Islands, and he was selected by the foremost Sacramento paper to spy out the islands and report aspects and conditions there. His letters home were still infrequent, but this was something worth writing.

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To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffet, in St. Louis:

SAN FRANCISCO, *March 5th, 1866.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I start to do Sandwich Islands day after tomorrow, (I suppose Annie is geographer enough by this time to find them on the map), in the steamer "Ajax." We shall arrive there in about twelve days. My friends seem determined that I shall not lack acquaintances, for I only decided today to go, and they have already sent me letters of introduction to everybody down there worth knowing. I am to remain there a month and ransack the islands, the great cataracts and the volcanoes completely, and write twenty or thirty letters to the Sacramentó *Union*—for which they pay me as much money as I would get if I staid at home.

If I come back here I expect to start straight across the continent by way of the Columbia river, the Pend d'Oreille Lakes, through Montana and down the Missouri river,—only 200 miles of land travel from San Francisco to New Orleans.

Goodbye for the present.

Yours,

SAM.

His home letters from the islands are numerous enough; everything there being so new and so delightful that he found joy in telling of it; also, he was still young enough to air his triumphs a little, especially when he has dined with the Grand Chamberlain and is going to visit the King!

The languorous life of the islands exactly suited Mark Twain. All his life he remembered them—always planning to return, some day, to stay there until he died. In one of his note-books he wrote: "Went with Mr. Dam to his cool, vine-shaded *home;* no care-worn or eager, anxious faces in this land of happy contentment. God, what a contrast with California and the Washoe!"

And again:

"Oh, Islands there are on the face of the deep
Where the leaves never fade and the skies never weep."

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The letters tell the story of his sojourn, which stretched itself into nearly five months.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

HONOLULU, SANDWICH ISLANDS, *April 3, 1866.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I have been here two or three weeks, and like the beautiful tropical climate better and better. I have ridden on horseback all over this island (Oahu) in the meantime, and have visited all the ancient battle-fields and other places of interest. I have got a lot of human bones which I took from one of these battle-fields—I guess I will bring you some of them. I went with the American Minister and took dinner this evening with the King's Grand Chamberlain, who is related to the royal family, and although darker than a mulatto, he has an excellent English education and in manners is an accomplished gentleman. The dinner was as ceremonious as any I ever attended in California—five regular courses, and five kinds of wine and one of brandy. He is to call for me in the morning with his carriage, and we will visit the King at the palace—both are good Masons —the King is a Royal Arch Mason. After dinner tonight they called in the "singing girls," and we had some beautiful music, sung in the native tongue.

The steamer I came here in sails tomorrow, and as soon as she is gone I shall sail for the other islands of the group and visit the great volcano—the grand wonder of the world. Be gone two months.

Yrs.

SAM.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

WAILUKU SUGAR PLANTATION,
ISLAND OF MAUI, H. I., *May 4, 1866.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—11 O'clock at night. —This is the infernalist darkest country, when the moon

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don't shine; I stumbled and fell over my horse's lariat a minute ago and hurt my leg, so I must stay here tonight.

I got the same leg hurt last week; I said I hadn't got hold of a spirited horse since I had been on the island, and one of the proprietors loaned me a big vicious colt; he was altogether too spirited; I went to tighten the cinch before mounting him, when he let out with his left leg (?) and kicked me across a ten-acre lot. A native rubbed and doctored me so well that I was able to stand on my feet in half an hour. It was then half after four and I had an appointment to go seven miles and get a girl and take her to a card party at five.

I have been clattering around among the plantations for three weeks, now, and next week I am going to visit the extinct crater of Mount Haleakala—the largest in the world; it is ten miles to the foot of the mountain; it rises 10,000 feet above the valley; the crater is 29 miles in circumference and 1,000 feet deep. Seen from the summit, the city of St. Louis would look like a picture in the bottom of it.

As soon as I get back from Haleakala (pronounced Hally-ekka-lah) I will sail for Honolulu again and thence to the Island of Hawaii (pronounced Hah-wy-ye,) to see the greatest *active* volcano in the world—that of Kilauea (pronounced Kee-low-way-ah)—and from thence back to San Francisco—and then, doubtless, to the States. I have been on this trip two months, and it will probably be two more before I get back to California.

Yrs affy

SAM.

He was having a glorious time—one of the most happy, carefree adventures of his career. No form of travel or undertaking could discountenance Mark Twain at thirty.

To Mrs. Orion Clemens, in Carson City:

HONOLULU, *May 22, 1866.*

MY DEAR SISTER,—I have just got back from a sea voyage—from the beautiful island of Maui. I have spent

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five weeks there, riding backwards and forwards among the sugar plantations—looking up the splendid scenery and visiting the lofty crater of Haleakala. It has been a perfect jubilee to me in the way of pleasure.

I have not written a single line, and have not once thought of business, or care or human toil or trouble or sorrow or weariness. Few such months come in a lifetime.

I set sail again, a week hence, for the island of Hawaii, to see the great active volcano of Kilauea. I shall not get back here for four or five weeks, and shall not reach San Francisco before the latter part of July.

So it is no use to wait for me to go home. Go on yourselves.

If I were in the east now, I could stop the publication of a piratical book which has stolen some of my sketches.

It is late—good-bye, Mollie,

Yr Bro Sam.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

Honolulu, Sandwich Islands,
June 21, 1866.

My dear Mother and Sister,—I have just got back from a hard trip through the Island of Hawaii, begun on the 26th of May and finished on the 18th of June—only six or seven days at sea—all the balance horse-back, and the hardest mountain road in the world. I staid at the volcano about a week and witnessed the greatest eruption that has occurred for years. I lived well there. They charge $4 a day for board, and a dollar or two extra for guides and horses. I had a pretty good time. They didn't charge me anything. I have got back sick—went to bed as soon as I arrived here—shall not be strong again for several days yet. I rushed too fast. I ought to have taken five or six weeks on that trip.

A week hence I start for the Island of Kauai, to be gone three weeks and *then* I go back to California.

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The Crown Princess is dead and thousands of natives cry and wail and dance and dance for the dead, around the King's Palace all night and every night. They will keep it up for a month and then she will be buried.

Hon. Anson Burlingame, U. S. Minister to China, and Gen. Van Valkenburgh, Minister to Japan, with their families and suites, have just arrived here *en route*. They were going to do me the honor to call on me this morning, and that accounts for my being out of bed now. You know what condition my room is always in when you are not around—so I climbed out of bed and dressed and shaved pretty quick and went up to the residence of the American Minister and called on *them*. Mr. Burlingame told me a good deal about Hon. Jere Clemens and that Virginia Clemens who was wounded in a duel. He was in Congress years with both of them. Mr. B. sent for his son, to introduce him—said he could tell that frog story of mine as well as anybody. I told him I was glad to hear it for I never tried to tell it myself without making a botch of it. At his request I have loaned Mr. Burlingame pretty much everything I ever wrote. I guess he will be an almighty wise man by the time he wades through that lot.

If the New United States Minister to the Sandwich Islands (Hon. Edwin McCook,) were only here now, so that I could get his views on this new condition of Sandwich Island politics, I would sail for California at once. But he will not arrive for two weeks yet and so I am going to spend that interval on the island of Kauai.

I stopped three days with Hon. Mr. Cony, Deputy Marshal of the Kingdom, at Hilo, Hawaii, last week and by a funny circumstance he knew everybody that I ever knew in Hannibal and Palmyra. We used to sit up all night talking and then sleep all day. He lives like a Prince. Confound that Island! I had a streak of fat and a streak of lean all over it—got lost several times and had to sleep in huts with the natives and live like a dog.

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Of course I couldn't speak fifty words of the language. Take it altogether, though, it was a mighty hard trip.

Yours Affect.

SAM.

Burlingame and Van Valkenburgh were on their way to their posts, and their coming to the islands just at this time proved a most important circumstance to Mark Twain. We shall come to this presently, in a summary of the newspaper letters written to the *Union*. June 27th he wrote to his mother and sister a letter, only a fragment of which survives, in which he tells of the arrival in Honolulu of the survivors of the ship *Hornet*, burned on the line, and of his securing the first news report of the lost vessel.

Part of a letter to Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

HONOLULU, *June 27, 1866.*

. . . with a gill of water a day to each man. I got the whole story from the third mate and two of the sailors. If my account gets to the Sacramento Union first, it will be *published* first all over the United States, France, England, Russia and Germany—all over the world, I may say. You will see it. Mr. Burlingame went with me all the time, and helped me question the men—throwing away invitations to dinner with the princes and foreign dignitaries, and neglecting all sorts of things to accommodate me. You know how I appreciate that kind of thing—especially from *such* a man, who is acknowledged to have no superior in the diplomatic circles of the world, and obtained from China concessions in favor of America which were refused to Sir Frederick Bruce and Envoys of France and Russia until procured for them by Burlingame himself—which service was duly acknowledged by those dignitaries. He hunted me up as soon as he came here, and has done me a hundred favors since, and says if I will come to China in the first trip of the great mail steamer next January and make his house in Pekin

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my home, he will afford me facilities that few men can have there for seeing and learning. He will give me letters to the chiefs of the great Mail Steamship Company which will be of service to me in this matter. I expect to do all this, but I expect to go to the States first—and from China to the Paris World's Fair.

Don't show this letter.

Yours affly

SAM.

P. S. The crown Princess of this Kingdom will be buried tomorrow with great ceremony—after that I sail in two weeks for California.

This concludes Mark Twain's personal letters from the islands. Of his descriptive news letters there were about twenty, and they were regarded by the readers of the *Union* as distinctly notable. Re-reading those old letters to-day it is not altogether easy to understand why. They were set in fine nonpareil type, for one thing, which present-day eyes simply refuse at any price, and the reward, by present-day standards, is not especially tempting.

The letters began in the *Union* with the issue of April the 16th, 1866. The first—of date March 18th—tells of the writer's arrival at Honolulu. The humor in it is not always of a high order; it would hardly pass for humor to-day at all. That the same man who wrote the Hawaiian letters in 1866 (he was then over thirty years old) could, two years later, have written that marvelous book, the *Innocents Abroad*, is a phenomenon in literary development.

The Hawaiian letters, however, do show the transition stage between the rough elemental humor of the Comstock and the refined and subtle style which flowered in the *Innocents Abroad*. Certainly Mark Twain's genius was finding itself, and his association with the refined and cultured personality of Anson Burlingame undoubtedly aided in that discovery. Burlingame pointed out his faults to him, and directed him to a better way. No more than that was needed at such a time to bring about a transformation.

The Sandwich Islands letters, however, must have been precisely adapted to their audience—a little more refined than the

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Comstock, a little less subtle than the Atlantic public—and they added materially to his Coast prestige. But let us consider a sample extract from the first Sandwich Islands letter:

Our little band of passengers were as well and thoughtfully cared for by the friends they left weeping upon the wharf, as ever were any similar body of pilgrims. The traveling outfit conferred upon me began with a naval uniform, continued with a case of wine, a small assortment of medicinal liquors and brandy, several boxes of cigars, a bunch of matches, a fine-toothed comb, and a cake of soap, and ended with a pair of socks. (N. B. I gave the soap to Brown, who bit into it, and then shook his head and said that, as a general thing, he liked to prospect curious, foreign dishes, and find out what they were made of, but he couldn't go that, and threw it overboard.)

It is nearly impossible to imagine humor in this extract, yet it is a fair sample of the entire letter.

He improves in his next, at least, in description, and gives us a picture of the crater. In this letter, also, he writes well and seriously, in a prophetic strain, of the great trade that is to be established between San Francisco and Hawaii, and argues for a line of steamers between the ports, in order that the islands might be populated by Americans, by which course European trade in that direction could be superseded. But the humor in this letter, such as it is, would scarcely provoke a smile to-day.

As the letters continue, he still urges the fostering of the island trade by the United States, finds himself impressed by the work of the missionaries, who have converted cannibals to Christians, and gives picturesque bits of the life and scenery.

Hawaii was then dominated chiefly by French and English, though the American interests were by no means small.

Extract from letter No. 4:

Cap. Fitch said "There's the king. That's him in the buggy. I know him as far as I can see him."

I had never seen a king, and I naturally took out a note-book and put him down: "Tall, slender, dark, full-

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bearded; green frock-coat, with lapels and collar bordered with gold band an inch wide; plug hat, broad gold band around it; royal costume looks too much like livery; this man is not as fleshy as I thought he was.

I had just got these notes when Cap. Fitch discovered that he'd got hold of the wrong king, or rather, that he'd got hold of the king's driver, or a carriage driver of one of the nobility. The king wasn't present at all. It was a great disappointment to me. I heard afterwards that the comfortable, easy-going king, Kamehameha V., had been seen sitting on a barrel on the wharf, the day before, fishing. But there was no consolation in that. That did not restore me my lost king.

This has something of the flavor of the man we were to know later; the quaint, gentle resignation to disappointment which is one of the finest touches in his humor.

Further on he says: "I had not shaved since I left San Francisco. As soon as I got ashore I hunted up a striped pole, and shortly found one. I always had a yearning to be a king. This may never be, I suppose, but, at any rate, it will always be a satisfaction to me to know that, if I am not a king, I am the next thing to it. I have been shaved by the king's barber."

Honolulu was a place of cats. He saw cats of every shade and variety. He says: "I saw cats—tomcats, Mary-Ann cats, bob-tailed cats, blind cats, one-eyed cats, wall-eyed cats, cross-eyed cats, gray cats, black cats, white cats, yellow cats, striped cats, spotted cats, tame cats, wild cats, singed cats, individual cats, groups of cats, platoons of cats, companies of cats, armies of cats, multitudes of cats, millions of cats, and all of them sleek, fat, and lazy, and sound asleep." Which illustrates another characteristic of the humor we were to know later—the humor of grotesque exaggeration, in which he was always strong.

He found the islands during his periods of inaction conducive to indolence. "If I were not so fond of looking into the rich mass of green leaves," he says, "that swathe the stately tamarind right before my door, I would idle less, and write more, I think."

The *Union* made good use of his letters. Sometimes it printed them on the front page. Evidently they were popular from the beginning. The *Union* was a fine, handsome paper—beautiful

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in its minute typography, and in its presswork; more beautiful than most papers of to-day, with their machine-set type, their vulgar illustrations, and their chain-lightning presses. A few more extracts:

"The only cigars here are those trifling, insipid, tasteless, flavorless things they call Manilas—ten for twenty-five cents—and it would take a thousand of them to be worth half the money. After you have smoked about thirty-five dollars' worth of them in the forenoon, you feel nothing but a desperate yearning to go out somewhere and take a smoke."

"Captains and ministers form about half the population. The third fourth is composed of Kanakas and mercantile foreigners and their families. The final fourth is made up of high officers of the Hawaiian government, and there are just about enough cats to go round."

In No. 6, April the 2d, he says: "An excursion to Diamond Head, and the king's cocoanut grove, was planned to-day, at 4.30 P. M., the party to consist of half a dozen gentlemen and three ladies. They all started at the appointed hour except myself. Somebody remarked that it was twenty minutes past five o'clock, and that woke me up. It was a fortunate circumstance that Cap. Phillips was there with his 'turn-out,' as he calls his top buggy that Cap. Cook brought here in 1778, and a horse that was here when Cap. Cook came."

This bit has something the savor of his subsequent work, but, as a rule, the humor compares poorly with that which was to come later.

In No. 7 he speaks of the natives singing American songs—not always to his comfort. "Marching Through Georgia" was one of their favorite airs. He says: "If it had been all the same to Gen. Sherman, I wish he had gone around by the way of the Gulf of Mexico, instead of marching through Georgia."

Letters Nos. 8, 9, and 10 were not of special importance. In No. 10 he gives some advice to San Francisco as to the treatment of whalers. He says:

"If I were going to advise San Francisco as to the best strategy to employ in order to secure the whaling trade, I should say, 'Cripple your facilities for "pulling" sea captains on any pretence that sailors can trump up, and show the whaler a little more consideration when he is in port.'"

In No. 11, May 24th, he tells of a trip to the Kalehi Valley, and through historic points. At one place he looked from a

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precipice over which old Kamehameha I. drove the army of Oahu, three-quarters of a century before.

The vegetation and glory of the tropics attracted him. "In one open spot a vine of a species unknown had taken possession of two tall dead stumps, and wound around and about them, and swung out from their tops, and twined their meeting tendrils together into a faultless arch. Man, with all his art, could not improve upon its symmetry."

He saw Sam Brannan's palace, "The Bungalow," built by one Shillaber of San Francisco at a cost of from thirty to forty thousand dollars. In its day it had outshone its regal neighbor, the palace of the king, but had fallen to decay after passing into Brannan's hands, and had become a picturesque Theban ruin by the time of Mark Twain's visit.

In No. 12, June 20th (written May 23d), he tells of the Hawaiian Legislature, and of his trip to the island of Maui, where, as he says, he never spent so pleasant a month before, or bade any place good-by so regretfully.

In No. 13 he continues the Legislature, and gives this picture of Minister Harris: "He is six feet high, bony and rather slender; long, ungainly arms; stands so straight he leans back a little; has small side whiskers; his head long, up and down; he has no command of language or ideas; oratory all show and pretence; a big washing and a small hang-out; weak, insipid, and a damn fool in general."

In No. 14, June 22d, published July 16th, he tells of the death and burial ceremonies of the Princess Victoria K. K., and, what was to be of more importance to him, of the arrival of Anson Burlingame, U. S. Minister to China, and Gen. Van Valkenburgh, U. S. Minister to Japan. They were to stay ten or fourteen days, he said, but an effort would be made to have them stay over July 4th.

Speaking of Burlingame: "Burlingame is a man who could be esteemed, respected, and popular anywhere, no matter whether he was among Christians or cannibals." Then, in the same letter, comes the great incident. "A letter arrived here yesterday, giving a meagre account of the arrival, on the Island of Hawaii, of nineteen poor, starving wretches, who had been buffeting a stormy sea, in an open boat, for forty-three days. Their ship, the *Hornet*, from New York, with a quantity of kerosene on board had taken fire and burned in Lat. 2° north, and Long. 135° west. When they had been entirely out of provisions for

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a day or two, and the cravings of hunger become insufferable, they yielded to the ship-wrecked mariner's fearful and awful alternative, and solemnly drew lots to determine who of their number should die, to furnish food for his comrades; and then the morning mists lifted, and they saw land. They are being cared for at Sanpahoe (Not yet corroborated)."

The *Hornet* disaster was fully told in his letter of June 27th. The survivors were brought to Honolulu, and with the assistance of the Burlingame party, Clemens, laid up with saddle boils, was carried on a stretcher to the hospital, where, aided by Burlingame, he interviewed the shipwrecked men, securing material for the most important piece of serious writing he had thus far performed. Letter No. 15 to the *Union*—of date June 25th—occupied the most of the first page in the issue of July 19. It was a detailed account of the sufferings of officers and crew, as given by the third officer and members of the crew.

From letter No. 15:

In the postscript of a letter which I wrote two or three days ago, and sent by the ship "Live Yankee," I gave you the substance of a letter received here from Hilo, by Walker Allen and Co., informing them that a boat, containing fifteen men in a helpless and starving condition, had drifted ashore at Sanpahoe, Island of Hawaii, and that they had belonged to the clipper ship "Hornet"—Cap. Mitchell, master—had been afloat since the burning of that vessel, about one hundred miles north of the equator, on the third of May—forty-three days.

The Third Mate, and ten of the seamen have arrived here, and are now in the hospital. Cap. Mitchell, one seaman named Antonio Passene, and two passengers, Samuel and Henry Ferguson, of New York City, eighteen and twenty-eight years, are still at Hilo, but are expected here within the week. In the Captain's modest epitome of the terrible romance you detect the fine old hero through it. It reads like Grant.

Here follows the whole terrible narrative, which has since been published in more substantial form, and has been recognized as literature. It occupied three and a half columns on

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the front page of the *Union*, and, of course, constituted a great beat for that paper—a fact which they appreciated to the extent of one hundred dollars the column upon the writer's return from the islands.

In letters Nos. 14 and 15 he gives further particulars of the month of mourning for the princess, and funeral ceremonials. He refers to Burlingame, who was still in the islands. The remaining letters are unimportant.

The Hawaiian episode in Mark Twain's life was one of those spots that seemed to him always filled with sunlight. From beginning to end it had been a long luminous dream; in the next letter, written on the homeward-bound ship, becalmed under a cloudless sky, we realize the fitting end of the experience.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

ON BOARD SHIP *Smyrniote*,
AT SEA, *July 30, 1866.*

DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I write, now, because I must go hard at work as soon as I get to San Francisco, and then I shall have no time for other things—though truth to say I have nothing *now* to write which will be calculated to interest you much. We left the Sandwich Islands eight or ten days—or twelve days ago—I don't know which, I have been so hard at work until today (at least part of each day,) that the time has slipped away almost unnoticed. The first few days we came at a whooping gait—being in the latitude of the "North-east trades," but we soon ran out of them. We used them as long as they lasted—hundred of miles—and came dead straight north until exactly abreast of San Francisco—precisely straight west of the city in a bee-line—but a *long* bee-line, as we were about two thousand miles at sea—consequently, we are not a hundred yards nearer San Francisco than *you* are. And here we lie becalmed on a glassy sea—we do not move an inch—we throw banana and orange peel overboard and it lies still on the water by the vessel's side. Sometimes the ocean is as dead level as the Mississippi river, and glitters glassily

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as if polished—but usually, of course, no matter how calm the weather is, we roll and surge over the grand ground-swell. We amuse ourselves tying pieces of tin to the ship's log and sinking them to see how far we can distinguish them under water—86 feet was the deepest we could see a small piece of tin, but a white plate would show about as far down as the steeple of Dr. Bullard's church would reach, I guess. The sea is very dark and blue here

Ever since we got becalmed—five days—I have been copying the diary of one of the young Fergusons (the two boys who starved and suffered, with thirteen others, in an open boat at sea for forty-three days, lately, after their ship, the "Hornet," was burned on the equator.) Both these boys, and Captain Mitchell, are passengers with us. I am copying the diary to publish in Harper's Magazine, if I have time to fix it up properly when I get to San Francisco.

I suppose, from present appearances,—light winds and calms,—that we shall be two or three weeks at sea, yet —and I hope so—I am in no hurry to go to work.

Sunday Morning, Aug. 6.

This is rather slow. We still drift, drift, drift along—at intervals a spanking breeze and then—drift again—hardly move for half a day. But I enjoy it. We have such snowy moonlight, and such gorgeous sunsets. And the ship is so easy—even in a gale she rolls very little, compared to other vessels—and in this calm we could dance on deck, if we chose. You can walk a crack, so steady is she. Very different from the Ajax. My trunk used to get loose in the stateroom and rip and tear around the place as if it had life in it, and I always had to take my clothes off in bed because I could not stand up and do it.

There is a ship in sight—the first object we have seen since we left Honolulu. We are still 1300 or 1400 miles from land and so anything like this that varies the vast

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solitude of the ocean makes all hands light-hearted and cheerful. We think the ship is the "Comet," which left Honolulu several hours before we did. She is about twelve miles away, and so we cannot see her hull, but the sailors think it is the Comet because of some peculiarity about her fore-top-gallant sails. We have watched her all the forenoon.

Afternoon—We had preaching on the quarter-deck by Rev. Mr. Rising, of Virginia City, old friend of mine. Spread a flag on the booby-hatch, which made a very good pulpit, and then ranged the chairs on either side against the bulwarks; last Sunday we had the shadow of the mainsail, but today we were on the opposite tack, close hauled, and had the sun. I am leader of the choir on this ship, and a sorry lead it is. I hope they will have a better opinion of our music in Heaven than I have down here. If they don't a thunderbolt will come down and knock the vessel endways.

The other ship *is* the Comet—she is right abreast three miles away, sailing on our course—both of us in a dead calm. With the glasses we can see what we take to be men and women on her decks. I am well acquainted with nearly all her passengers, and being so close seems right sociable.

Monday 7—I had just gone to bed a little after midnight when the 2d mate came and roused up the captain and said "The Comet has come round and is standing away on the other tack." I went up immediately, and so did all our passengers, without waiting to dress—men, women and children. There was a perceptible breeze. Pretty soon the other ship swept down upon us with all her sails set, and made a fine show in the luminous starlight. She passed within a hundred yards of us, so we could faintly see persons on her decks. We had two minutes' chat with each other, through the medium of hoarse shouting, and then she bore away to windward.

In the morning she was only a little black peg standing out of the glassy sea in the distant horizon—an almost

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invisible mark in the bright sky. Dead calm. So the ships have stood, all day long—have not moved 100 yards.

Aug. 8—The calm continues. Magnificent weather. The gentlemen have all turned boys. They play boyish games on the poop and quarter-deck. For instance: They lay a knife on the fife-rail of the mainmast—stand off three steps, shut one eye, walk up and strike at it with the fore-finger; (seldom hit it;) also they lay a knife on the deck and walk seven or eight steps with eyes close shut, and try to find it. They kneel—place elbows against knees—extend hands in front along the deck—place knife against end of fingers—then clasp hands behind back and bend forward and try to pick up the knife with their teeth and rise up from knees without rolling over or losing their balance. They tie a string to the shrouds—stand with back against it—walk three steps (eyes shut)—turn around three times and go and put finger on the string; only a military man can do it. If you want to know how perfectly ridiculous a grown man looks performing such absurdities in the presence of ladies, get one to try it.

Afternoon—The calm is no more. There are three vessels in sight. It is so sociable to have them hovering about us on this broad waste of water. It is sunny and pleasant, but blowing hard. Every rag about the ship is spread to the breeze and she is speeding over the sea like a bird. There is a large brig right astern of us with all her canvas set and chasing us at her best. She came up fast while the winds were light, but now it is hard to tell whether she gains or not. We can see the people on the forecastle with the glass. The race is exciting. I am sorry to know that we shall soon have to quit the vessel and go ashore if she keeps up this speed.

Friday, Aug. 10—We have breezes and calms alternately. The brig is two miles to three astern, and just stays there. We sail *directly* east—this brings the brig, with all her canvas set, almost in the eye of the sun, when it sets—beautiful. She looks sharply cut and black as

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a coal, against a background of fire and in the midst of a sea of blood.

San Francisco, Aug. 20.—We never saw the Comet again till the 13th, in the morning, three miles away. At three o'clock that afternoon, 25 days out from Honolulu, both ships entered the Golden Gate of San Francisco *side* by *side*, and 300 yards apart. There was a gale blowing, and both vessels clapped on every stitch of canvas and swept up through the channel and past the fortresses at a magnificent gait.

I have been up to Sacramento and squared accounts with the *Union*. They paid me a great deal more than they promised me.

9 Yrs aff

SAM.

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VI

LETTERS 1866–67. THE LECTURER. SUCCESS ON THE COAST. IN NEW YORK. THE GREAT OCEAN EXCURSION

IT was August 13th when he reached San Francisco and wrote in his note-book, "Home again. No—not home again—in prison again, and all the wild sense of freedom gone. City seems so cramped and so dreary with toil and care and business anxieties. God help me, I wish I were at sea again!"

The transition from the dreamland of a becalmed sailing-vessel to the dull, cheerless realities of his old life, and the uncertainties of his future, depressed him—filled him with forebodings. At one moment he felt himself on the verge of suicide—the world seemed so little worth while.

He wished to make a trip around the world, a project that required money. He contemplated making a book of his island letters and experiences, and the acceptance by *Harper's Magazine* of the revised version of the Hornet Shipwreck story encouraged this thought.

Friends urged him to embody in a lecture the picturesque aspect of Hawaiian life. The thought frightened him, but it also appealed to him strongly. He believed he could entertain an audience, once he got started on the right track. As Governor of the Third House at Carson City he had kept the audience in hand. Men in whom he had the utmost confidence insisted that he follow up the lecture idea and engage the largest house in the city for his purpose. The possibility of failure appalled him, but he finally agreed to the plan.

In *Roughing It*, and elsewhere, has been told the story of this venture—the tale of its splendid success. He was no longer concerned, now, as to his immediate future. The lecture field was profitable. His audience laughed and shouted. He was learning the flavor of real success and exulting in it. With Dennis

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McCarthy, formerly one of the partners in the *Enterprise*, as manager, he made a tour of California and Nevada.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and others, in St. Louis:

VIRGINIA CITY, *Nov. 1, 1866.*

ALL THE FOLKS, AFFECTIONATE GREETING,—You know the flush times are past, and it has long been impossible to more than half fill the Theatre here, with any sort of attraction, but they filled it for me, night before last—full—dollar all over the house.

I was mighty dubious about Carson, but the enclosed call and some telegrams set that all right—I lecture there tomorrow night.

They offer a full house and no expense in Dayton—go there next. Sandy Baldwin says I have made the most sweeping success of any man he knows of.

I have lectured in San Francisco, Sacramento, Marysville, Grass Valley, Nevada, You Bet, Red Dog and Virginia. I am going to talk in Carson, Gold Hill, Silver City, Dayton, Washoe, San Francisco again, and again here if I have time to re-hash the lecture.

Then I am bound for New York—lecture on the Steamer, maybe.

I'll leave toward 1st December—but I'll telegraph you.

Love to all.

Yrs.
MARK.

His lecture tour continued from October until December, a period of picturesque incident, the story of which has been recorded elsewhere.[1] It paid him well; he could go home now, without shame. Indeed, from his next letter, full of the boyish elation which always to his last years was the complement of his success, we gather that he is going home with special honors—introductions from ministers and the like to distinguished personages of the East.

[1] See *Mark Twain: A Biography*, by the same author,

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To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

SAN F., *Dec. 4, 1866.*

MY DEAR FOLKS,—I have written to Annie and Sammy and Katie some time ago—also, to the balance of you.

I called on Rev. Dr. Wadsworth last night with the City College man, but he wasn't at home. I was sorry, because I wanted to make his acquaintance. I am thick as thieves with the Rev. Stebbings, and I am laying for the Rev. Scudder and the Rev. Dr. Stone. I am running on preachers, now, altogether. I find them gay. Stebbings is a regular brick. I am taking letters of introduction to Henry Ward Beecher, Rev. Dr. Tyng, and other eminent parsons in the east. Whenever anybody offers me a letter to a preacher, now I snaffle it on the spot. I shall make Rev. Dr. Bellows trot out the fast nags of the cloth for me when I get to New York. Bellows is an able, upright and eloquent man—a man of imperial intellect and matchless power—he is Christian in the truest sense of the term and is unquestionably a brick. . . .

Gen. Drum has arrived in Philadelphia and established his head-quarters there, as Adjutant Genl. to Maj. Gen. Meade. Col. Leonard has received a letter from him in which he offers me a complimentary benefit if I will come there. I am much obliged, really, but I am afraid I shan't lecture much in the States.

The China Mail Steamer is getting ready and everybody says I am throwing away a fortune in not going in her. I firmly believe it myself.

I sail for the States in the Opposition steamer of the 15th inst., positively and without reserve. My room is already secured for me, and is the choicest in the ship. I know all the officers.

Yrs. Affy

MARK.

We get no hint of his plans, and perhaps he had none. If his purpose was to lecture in the East, he was in no hurry to begin.

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Arriving in New York, after an adventurous voyage, he met a number of old Californians—men who believed in him—and urged him to lecture. He also received offers of newspaper engagements, and from Charles Henry Webb, who had published the *Californian*, which Bret Harte had edited, came the proposal to collect his published sketches, including the Jumping Frog story, in book form. Webb himself was in New York, and offered the sketches to several publishers, including Carlton, who had once refused the Frog story by omitting it from Artemus Ward's book. It seems curious that Carlton should make a second mistake and refuse it again, but publishers were wary in those days, and even the newspaper success of the Frog story did not tempt him to venture it as the title tale of a book. Webb finally declared he would publish the book himself, and Clemens, after a few weeks of New York, joined his mother and family in St. Louis and gave himself up to a considerable period of visiting, lecturing meantime in both Hannibal and Keokuk.

Fate had great matters in preparation for him. The Quaker City Mediterranean excursion, the first great ocean picnic, was announced that spring, and Mark Twain realized that it offered a possible opportunity for him to see something of the world. He wrote at once to the proprietors of the *Alta-California* and proposed that they send him as their correspondent. To his delight his proposition was accepted, the *Alta* agreeing to the twelve hundred dollars passage money, and twenty dollars each for letters.

The *Quaker City* was not to sail until the 8th of June, but the *Alta* wished some preliminary letters from New York. Furthermore, Webb had the Frog book in press, and would issue it May 1st. Clemens, therefore, returned to New York in April, and now once more being urged by the Californians to lecture, he did not refuse. Frank Fuller, formerly Governor of Utah, took the matter in hand and engaged Cooper Union for the venture. He timed it for May 6th, which would be a few days after the appearance of Webb's book. Clemens was even more frightened at the prospect of this lecture than he had been in San Francisco, and with more reason, for in New York his friends were not many, and competition for public favor was very great. There are two letters written May 1st, one to his people, and one to Bret Harte, in San Francisco, that give us the situation.

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To Bret Harte, in San Francisco:

WESTMINSTER HOTEL, *May 1, 1867.*

DEAR BRET,—I take my pen in hand to inform you that I am well and hope these few lines will find you enjoying the same God's blessing.

The book is out, and is handsome. It is full of damnable errors of grammar and deadly inconsistencies of spelling in the Frog sketch because I was away and did not read the proofs; but be a friend and say nothing about these things. When my hurry is over, I will send you an autograph copy to pisen the children with.

I am to lecture in Cooper Institute next Monday night. Pray for me.

We sail for the Holy Land June 8. Try to write me (to this hotel,) and it will be forwarded to Paris, where we remain 10 or 15 days.

Regards and best wishes to Mrs. Bret and the family.

Truly Yr Friend

MARK.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

WESTMINSTER HOTEL, *May 1, 1867.*

DEAR FOLKS,—Don't expect me to write for a while. My hands are full of business on account of my lecture for the 6th inst., and everything looks shady, at least, if not dark. I have got a good agent—but now after we have hired Cooper Institute and gone to an expense in one way or another of $500, it comes out that I have got to play against Speaker Colfax at Irving Hall, Ristori, and also the double troupe of Japanese Jugglers, the latter opening at the great Academy of Music—and with all this against me I have taken the largest house in New York and cannot back water. Let her slide! If nobody else cares I don't.

I'll send the book soon. I am awfully hurried now, but not worried.

Yrs. SAM.

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The Cooper Union lecture proved a failure, and a success. When it became evident to Fuller that the venture was not going to pay, he sent out a flood of complimentaries to the school-teachers of New York City and the surrounding districts. No one seems to have declined them. Clemens lectured to a jammed house and acquired much reputation. Lecture proposals came from several directions, but he could not accept them now. He wrote home that he was eighteen *Alta* letters behind and had refused everything. Thos. Nast, the cartoonist, then in his first fame, proposed a joint tour, Clemens to lecture while he, Nast, would illustrate with "lightning" sketches; but even this could not be considered now. In a little while he would sail, and the days were overfull. A letter written a week before he sailed is full of the hurry and strain of these last days.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

WESTMINSTER HOTEL, NEW YORK, *June 1, 1867.*

DEAR FOLKS,—I know I ought to write oftener (just got your last,) and more fully, but I cannot overcome my repugnance to telling what I am doing or what I expect to do or propose to do. Then, what have I left to write about? Manifestly nothing.

It isn't any use for me to talk about the voyage, because I can have no faith in that voyage till the ship is under way. How do I know she will ever sail? My passage is paid, and if the ship sails, I sail in her—but I make no calculations, have bought no cigars, no sea-going clothing —have made no preparation whatever—shall not pack my trunk till the morning we sail. Yet my hands are full of what I am going to do the day *before* we sail—and what isn't done that day will go undone.

All I do know or feel, is, that I am wild with impatience to move—move—*move!* Half a dozen times I have wished I had sailed long ago in some ship that wasn't going to keep me chained here to chafe for lagging ages while she got ready to go. Curse the endless delays! They always kill me—they make me neglect every duty and then I have a conscience that tears me like a wild beast. I wish

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I never had to stop anywhere a month. I do more mean things, the moment I get a chance to fold my hands and sit down than ever I can get forgiveness for.

Yes, we are to meet at Mr. Beach's next Thursday night, and I suppose we shall have to be gotten up regardless of expense, in swallow-tails, white kids and everything *en régle*.

I am resigned to Rev. Mr. Hutchinson's or anybody else's supervision. I don't mind it. I am fixed. I have got a splendid, immoral, tobacco-smoking, wine-drinking, godless room-mate who is as good and true and right-minded a man as ever lived—a man whose blameless conduct and example will always be an eloquent sermon to all who shall come within their influence. But send on the professional preachers—there are none I like better to converse with. If they're not narrow minded and bigoted they make good companions.

I asked them to send the N. Y. Weekly to you—no charge. I am not going to write for it. Like all other papers that pay one splendidly it circulates among stupid people and the *canaille*. I have made no arrangement with any New York paper—I will see about that Monday or Tuesday.

Love to all
Good bye,
Yrs affy
SAM.

The "immoral" room-mate whose conduct was to be an "eloquent example" was Dan Slote, immortalized in the *Innocents* as "Dan"—a favorite on the ship, and later beloved by countless readers.

There is one more letter, written the night before the *Quaker City* sailed—a letter which in a sense marks the close of the first great period of his life—the period of aimless wandering—adventure—youth.

Perhaps a paragraph of explanation should precede this letter. Political changes had eliminated Orion in Nevada, and he was now undertaking the practice of law. "Bill Stewart"

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was Senator Stewart, of Nevada, of whom we shall hear again. The "Sandwich Island book," as may be imagined, was made up of his letters to the Sacramento *Union*. Nothing came of the venture, except some chapters in *Roughing It*, rewritten from the material. "Zeb and John Leavenworth" were pilots whom he had known on the river.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

NEW YORK, *June 7th, 1867.*

DEAR FOLKS,—I suppose we shall be many a league at sea tomorrow night, and goodness knows I shall be unspeakably glad of it.

I haven't got *any*thing to write, else I *would* write it. I have just written myself clear out in letters to the *Alta*, and I think they are the stupidest letters that were ever written from New York. Corresponding has been a perfect drag ever since I got to the states. If it continues abroad, I don't know what the Tribune and Alta folks will think.

I have withdrawn the Sandwich Island book—it would be useless to publish it in these dull publishing times. As for the Frog book, I don't believe that will ever pay anything worth a cent. I published it simply to advertise myself—not with the hope of making anything out of it.

Well, I haven't anything to write, except that I am tired of staying in one place—that I am in a fever to get away. Read my Alta letters—they contain everything I could possibly write to you. Tell Zeb and John Leavenworth to write me. They can get plenty of gossip from the pilots.

An importing house sent two cases of exquisite champagne aboard the ship for me today—Veuve Clicquot and Lac d'Or. I and my room-mate have set apart every Saturday as a solemn fast day, wherein we will entertain no light matters of frivolous conversation, but only get drunk. (That is a joke.) His mother and sisters are the best and most homelike people I have yet found in a

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brown stone front. There is no style about them, except in house and furniture.

I wish Orion were going on this voyage, for I believe he could not help but be cheerful and jolly. I often wonder if his law business is going satisfactorily to him, but knowing that the dull season is setting in now (it looked like it had already set in before) I have felt as if I could almost answer the question myself—which is to say in plain words, I was afraid to ask. I wish I had gone to Washington in the winter instead of going West. I could have gouged an office out of Bill Stewart for him, and that would atone for the loss of my home visit. But I am so worthless that it seems to me I never do anything or accomplish anything that lingers in my mind as a pleasant memory. My mind is stored full of unworthy conduct toward Orion and towards you all, and an accusing conscience gives me peace only in excitement and restless moving from place to place. If I could say I had done one thing for any of you that entitled me to your good opinion, (I say nothing of your love, for I am sure of *that*, no matter how unworthy of it I may make myself, from Orion down you have always given me that, all the days of my life, when God Almighty knows I seldom deserve it,) I believe I could go home and stay there and I *know* I would care little for the world's praise or blame. There is no satisfaction in the world's praise anyhow, and it has no worth to me save in the way of business. I tried to gather up its compliments to send to you, but the work was distasteful and I dropped it.

You observe that under a cheerful exterior I have got a spirit that is angry with me and gives me freely its contempt. I can get away from that at sea, and be tranquil and satisfied—and so, with my parting love and benediction for Orion and all of you, I say goodbye and God bless you all—and welcome the wind that wafts a weary soul to the sunny lands of the Mediterranean!

Yrs. Forever,

SAM.

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VII

LETTERS 1867. THE TRAVELER. THE VOYAGE OF THE "QUAKER CITY"

MARK TWAIN, now at sea, was writing many letters; not personal letters, but those unique descriptive relations of travel which would make him his first great fame—those fresh first impressions preserved to us now as chapters of *The Innocents Abroad*. Yet here and there in the midst of sight-seeing and reporting he found time to send a brief line to those at home, merely that they might have a word from his own hand, for he had ordered the papers to which he was to contribute—the *Alta* and the New York *Tribune*—sent to them, and these would give the story of his travels. The home letters read like notebook entries.

Letters to Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

FAYAL (AZORES,) *June 20th, 1867.*

DEAR FOLKS,—We are having a lively time here, after a stormy trip. We meant to go to San Miguel, but were driven here by stress of weather. Beautiful climate.

Yrs,—Affect.

SAM.

GIBRALTAR, *June 30th, 1867.*

DEAR FOLKS,—Arrived here this morning, and am clear worn out with riding and climbing in and over and around this monstrous rock and its fortifications. Summer climate and very pleasant.

Yrs. SAM.

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TANGIER, MOROCCO, (AFRICA), *July 1, 1867.*

DEAR FOLKS,—Half a dozen of us came here yesterday from Gibraltar and some of the company took the other direction; went up through Spain, to Paris by rail. We decided that Gibraltar and San Roque were all of Spain that we wanted to see at present and are glad we came here among the Africans, Moors, Arabs and Bedouins of the desert. I would not give this experience for all the balance of the trip combined. This is the infernalest hive of infernally costumed barbarians I have ever come across yet.

Yrs.

SAM.

TWAIN IN FAYAL

JOKE BY THE QUAKER CITY PRINTING OFFICE

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AT SEA, *July 2, 1867.*

DR. FOLKS,—We are far up the intensely blue and ravishingly beautiful Mediterranean. And now we are just passing the island of Minorca. The climate is perfectly lovely and it is hard to drive anybody to bed, day or night. We remain up the whole night through occasionally, and by this means enjoy the rare sensation of seeing the sun rise. But the sunsets are soft, rich, warm and superb!

We had a ball last night under the awnings of the quarter deck, and the share of it of three of us was masquerade. We had full, flowing, picturesque Moorish costumes which we purchased in the bazaars of Tangier.

YRS. SAM.

MARSEILLES, FRANCE, *July 5, 1867.*

We are here. Start for Paris tomorrow. All well. Had gorgeous 4th of July jollification yesterday at sea.

YRS. SAM.

The reader may expand these sketchy outlines to his heart's content by following the chapters in *The Innocents Abroad*, which is very good history, less elaborated than might be supposed. But on the other hand, the next letter adds something of interest to the book—circumstances which a modest author would necessarily omit.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

YALTA, RUSSIA, *Aug. 25, 1867.*

DEAR FOLKS,—We have been representing the United States all we knew how today. We went to Sebastopol, after we got tired of Constantinople (got your letter there, and one at Naples,) and there the Commandant and the whole town came aboard and were as jolly and sociable as old friends. They said the Emperor of Russia was at

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Yalta, 30 miles or 40 away, and urged us to go there with the ship and visit him—promised us a cordial welcome. They insisted on sending a telegram to the Emperor, and also a courier overland to announce our coming. But we knew that a great English Excursion party, and also the Viceroy of Egypt, in his splendid yacht, had been refused an audience within the last fortnight, so we thought it not safe to try it. They said, no difference—the Emperor would hardly visit our ship, because that would be a most extraordinary favor, and one which he uniformly refuses to accord under any circumstances, but he would certainly receive us at his palace. We still declined. But we had to go to Odessa, 250 miles away, and there the Governor General urged us, and sent a telegram to the Emperor, which we hardly expected to be answered, but it was, and promptly. So we sailed back to Yalta.

We all went to the palace at noon, today, (3 miles) in carriages and on horses sent by the Emperor, and we had a jolly time. Instead of the usual formal audience of 15 minutes, we staid 4 hours and were made a good deal more at home than we could have been in a New York drawing-room. The whole tribe turned out to receive our party—Emperor, Empress, the oldest daughter (Grand-Duchess Marie, a pretty girl of 14,) a little Grand Duke, her brother, and a platoon of Admirals, Princes, Peers of the Empire, etc., and in a little while an aid-de-camp arrived with a request from the Grand Duke Michael, the Emperor's brother, that we would visit his palace and breakfast with him. The Emperor also invited us, on behalf of his absent eldest son and heir (aged 22,) to visit *his* palace and consider it a visit to him. They all talk English and they were all very neatly but very plainly dressed. You all dress a good deal finer than they were dressed. The Emperor and his family threw off all reserve and showed us all over the palace themselves. It is very rich and very elegant, but in no way gaudy.

I had been appointed chairman of a committee to

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draught an address to the Emperor in behalf of the passengers, and as I fully expected, and as they fully intended, I had to write the address myself. I didn't mind it, because I have no modesty and would as soon write to an Emperor as to anybody else—but considering that there were 5 on the committee I thought they might have contributed *one* paragraph among them, anyway. They wanted me to *read* it to him, too, but I declined that honor—not because I hadn't cheek enough (and some to spare,) but because our Consul at Odessa was along, and also the Secretary of our Legation at St. Petersburgh, and of course one of those *ought* to read it. The Emperor accepted the address—it was his business to do it—and so many others have praised it warmly that I begin to imagine it must be a wonderful sort of document and herewith send you the original draught of it to be put into alcohol and preserved forever like a curious reptile.

They live right well at the Grand Duke Michael's—their breakfasts are not gorgeous but very excellent—and if Mike were to say the word I would go there and breakfast with him tomorrow.

Ys aff

SAM.

P. S. [Written across the face of the last page.] They had told us it would be polite to invite the Emperor to visit the ship, though he would not be likely to do it. But he didn't give us a chance—he has requested permission to come on board with his family and all his relations tomorrow and take a sail, in case it is calm weather. I can entertain them. My hand is in, now, and if you want any more Emperors fêted in style, trot them out.

The next letter is of interest in that it gives us the program and volume of his work. With all the sight-seeing he was averaging a full four letters a week—long letters, requiring careful observation and inquiry. How fresh and impressionable and full of vigor he was, even in that fierce southern heat! No one makes

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the Mediterranean trip in summer to-day, and the thought of adding constant letter-writing to steady travel through southern France, Italy, Greece, and Turkey in blazing midsummer is stupefying. And Syria and Egypt in September!

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

CONSTANTINOPLE, *Sept. 1, '67.*

DEAR FOLKS,—All well. Do the *Alta's* come regularly? I wish I knew whether my letters reach them or not. Look over the back papers and see. I wrote them as follows:

1 Letter from Fayal, in the Azores Islands.
1 from Gibraltar, in Spain.
1 from Tangier, in Africa.
2 from Paris and Marseilles, in France.
1 from Genoa, in Italy.
1 from Milan.
1 from Lake Como.
1 from some little place in Switzerland—have forgotten the name.
4 concerning Lecce, Bergamo, Padua, Verona, Battlefield of Marengo, Pestachio, and some other cities in Northern Italy.
2 from Venice.
1 about Bologna.
1 from Florence.
1 from Pisa.
1 from Leghorn.
1 from Rome and Civita Vecchia.
2 from Naples.
1 about Pazzuoli, where St. Paul landed, the Baths of Nero, and the ruins of Baia, Virgil's tomb, the Elysian Fields, the Sunken Cities and the spot where Ulysses landed.
1 from Herculaneum and Vesuvius.
1 from Pompeii.
1 from the Island of Ischia.

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1 concerning the Volcano of Stromboli, the city and Straits of Messina, the land of Sicily, Scylla and Charybdis etc.

1 about the Grecian Archipelago.

1 about a midnight visit to Athens, the Piraeus and the ruins of the Acropolis.

1 about the Hellespont, the site of ancient Troy, the Sea of Marmora, etc.

2 about Constantinople, the Golden Horn and the beauties of the Bosphorus.

1 from Odessa and Sebastopol in Russia, the Black Sea, etc.

2 from Yalta, Russia, concerning a visit to the Czar.

And yesterday I wrote another letter from Constantinople and

1 today about its neighbor in Asia, Scutari. I am not done with Turkey yet. Shall write 2 or 3 more.

I have written to the New York Herald 2 letters from Naples, (no name signed,) and 1 from Constantinople.

To the New York Tribune I have written

1 from Fayal.

1 from Civita Vecchia in the Roman States.

2 from Yalta, Russia.

And 1 from Constantinople.

I have never seen any of these letters in print except the one to the Tribune from Fayal and that was not worth printing.

We sail hence tomorrow, perhaps, and my next letters will be mailed at Smyrna, in Syria. I hope to write from the Sea of Tiberius, Damascus, Jerusalem, Joppa, and possibly other points in the Holy Land. The letters from Egypt, the Nile and Algiers I will look out for, myself. I will bring them in my pocket.

They take the finest photographs in the world here. I have ordered some. They will be sent to Alexandria, Egypt.

You cannot conceive of anything so beautiful as Constantinople, viewed from the Golden Horn or the Bos-

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phorus. I think it must be the handsomest city in the world. I will go on deck and look at it for you, directly. I am staying in the ship, tonight. I generally stay on shore when we are in port. But yesterday I just ran myself down. Dan Slote, my room-mate, is on shore. He remained here while we went up the Black Sea, but it seems he has not got enough of it yet. I thought Dan had got the state-room pretty full of rubbish at last, but a while ago his dragoman arrived with a bran new, ghastly tomb-stone of the Oriental pattern, with his name handsomely carved and gilded on it, in Turkish characters. That fellow will buy a Circassian slave, next.

I am tired. We are going on a trip, tomorrow. I must to bed. Love to all.

Yrs

SAM.

U. S. CONSUL'S OFFICE,
BEIRUT, SYRIA, *Sept. 11.* (*1867*)

DEAR FOLKS,—We are here, eight of us, making a contract with a dragoman to take us to Baalbek, then to Damascus, Nazareth, &c. then to Lake Genassareth (Sea of Tiberias,) then South through all the celebrated Scriptural localities to Jerusalem—then to the Dead Sea, the Cave of Macpelah and up to Joppa where the ship will be. We shall be in the saddle three weeks—we have horses, tents, provisions, arms, a dragoman and two other servants, and we pay five dollars a day apiece, in gold.

Love to all, yrs.

SAM.

We leave tonight, at two o'clock in the morning.

There appear to be no further home letters written from Syria —and none from Egypt. Perhaps with the desert and the delta the heat at last became too fearful for anything beyond the actual requirements of the day. When he began his next it was October, and the fiercer travel was behind him.

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To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

CAGHARI, SARDINIA, *Oct. 12, 1867.*

DEAR FOLKS,—We have just dropped anchor before this handsome city and——

ALGIERS, AFRICA, *Oct. 15.*

They would not let us land at Caghari on account of cholera. Nothing to write.

MALAGA, SPAIN, *Oct. 17.*

The Captain and I are ashore here under guard, waiting to know whether they will let the ship anchor or not. Quarantine regulations are very strict here on all vessels coming from Egypt. I am a little anxious because I want to go inland to Granada and see the Alhambra. I can go on down by Seville and Cordova, and be picked up at Cadiz.

Later: We cannot anchor—must go on. We shall be at Gibraltar before midnight and I think I will go horseback (2 long days) and thence by rail and diligence to. Cadiz. I will not mail this till I see the Gibraltar lights—I begin to think they won't let us in anywhere.

11.30 P. M.—Gibraltar.
At anchor and all right, but they won't let us land till morning—it is a waste of valuable time. We shall reach New York middle of November.

Yours, SAM.

CADIZ, *Oct. 24, 1867.*

DEAR FOLKS,—We left Gibraltar at noon and rode to Algeciras, (4 hours) thus dodging the quarantine, took dinner and then rode horseback all night in a swinging trot and at daylight took a caleche (2-wheeled vehicle) and rode 5 hours—then took cars and traveled till twelve at night. That landed us at Seville and we were over the

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hard part of our trip, and somewhat tired. Since then we have taken things comparatively easy, drifting around from one town to another and attracting a good deal of attention, for I guess strangers do not wander through Andalusia and the other Southern provinces of Spain often. The country is precisely as it was when Don Quixote and Sancho Panza were possible characters.

But I see now what the glory of Spain must have been when it was under Moorish domination. No, I will not say that, but then when one is carried away, infatuated, entranced, with the wonders of the Alhambra and the supernatural beauty of the Alcazar, he is apt to overflow with admiration for the splendid intellects that created them.

I cannot write now. I am only dropping a line to let you know I am well. The ship will call for us here tomorrow. We *may* stop at Lisbon, and shall at the Bermudas, and will arrive in New York ten days after this letter gets there.

Yrs.

SAM.

This is the last personal letter written during that famous first sea-gipsying, and reading it our regret grows that he did not put something of his Spanish excursion into his book. He never returned to Spain, and he never wrote of it. Only the barest mention of "seven beautiful days" is found in *The Innocents Abroad.*

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VIII

LETTERS 1867–68. WASHINGTON AND SAN FRANCISCO. THE PROPOSED BOOK OF TRAVEL. A NEW LECTURE

FROM Mark Twain's home letters we get several important side-lights on this first famous book. We learn, for instance, that it was he who drafted the ship address to the Emperor—the opening lines of which became so wearisome when repeated by the sailors. Furthermore, we learn something of the scope and extent of his newspaper correspondence, which must have kept him furiously busy, done as it was in the midst of super-heated and continuous sight-seeing. He wrote fifty-three letters to the *Alta-California*, six to the New York *Tribune*, and at least two to the New York *Herald*—more than sixty, all told, of an average length of three to four thousand words each. Mark Twain always claimed to be a lazy man, and certainly he was likely to avoid an undertaking not suited to his gifts, but he had energy in abundance for work in his chosen field. To have piled up a correspondence of that size in the time, and under the circumstances already noted, quality considered, may be counted a record in the history of travel letters.

They made him famous. Arriving in New York, November 19, 1867, Mark Twain found himself no longer unknown to the metropolis, or to any portion of America. Papers East and West had copied his *Alta* and *Tribune* letters and carried his name into every corner of the States and Territories. He had preached a new gospel in travel literature, the gospel of frankness and sincerity that Americans could understand. Also his literary powers had awakened at last. His work was no longer trivial, crude, and showy; it was full of dignity, beauty, and power; his humor was finer, worthier. The difference in quality between the *Quaker City* letters and those written from the Sandwich Islands only a year before can scarcely be measured.

He did not remain in New York, but went down to Washing-

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ton, where he had arranged for a private secretaryship with Senator William M. Stewart,[1] whom he had known in Nevada. Such a position he believed would make but little demand upon his time, and would afford him an insight into Washington life, which he could make valuable in the shape of newspaper correspondence.

But fate had other plans for him. He presently received the following letter:

From Elisha Bliss, Jr., in Hartford

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAN PUBLISHING COMPANY.

HARTFORD, CONN., *Nov 21, 1867.*

SAMUEL L. CLEMENS Esq.

Tribune Office, New York.

DR. SIR,—We take the liberty to address you this, in place of a letter which we had recently written and was about to forward to you, not knowing your arrival home was expected so soon. We are desirous of obtaining from you a work of some kind, perhaps compiled from your letters from the East, &c., with such interesting additions as may be proper. We are the publishers of A. D. Richardson's works, and flatter ourselves that we can give an author as favorable terms and do as full justice to his productions as any other house in the country. We are perhaps the oldest subscription house in the country, and have never failed to give a book an immense circulation. We sold about 100,000 copies of Richardson's F. D. & E. (Field, Dungeon and Escape) and are now printing 41,000 of "Beyond the Mississippi," and large orders ahead. If you have any thought of writing a book, or could be induced to do so, we should be pleased to see you, and will do so. Will you do us the favor to reply at once, at your earliest convenience.

Very truly, &c.,

E. BLISS, Jr.
Secty.

[1] The "Bill" Stewart mentioned in the preceding chapter.

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Clemens had already the idea of a book in mind and welcomed this proposition.

To Elisha Bliss, Jr., in Hartford:

WASHINGTON, *Dec. 2, 1867.*

E. BLISS, Jr. Esq.

Sec'y American Publishing Co.—

DEAR SIR,—I only received your favor of Nov. 21st last night, at the rooms of the Tribune Bureau here. It was forwarded from the Tribune office, New York, where it had lain eight or ten days. This will be a sufficient apology for the seeming discourtesy of my silence.

I wrote fifty-two (three) letters for the San Francisco "Alta California" during the Quaker City excursion, about half of which number have been printed, thus far. The "Alta" has few exchanges in the East, and I suppose scarcely any of these letters have been copied on this side of the Rocky Mountains. I could weed them of their chief faults of construction and inelegancies of expression and make a volume that would be more acceptable in many respects than any I could now write. When those letters were written my impressions were fresh, but now they have lost that freshness; they were warm then—they are cold, now. I could strike out certain letters, and write new ones wherewith to supply their places. If you think such a book would suit your purpose, please drop me a line, specifying the size and general style of the volume; when the matter ought to be ready; whether it should have pictures in it or not; and particularly what your terms with me would be, and what amount of money I might possibly make out of it. The latter clause has a degree of importance for me which is almost beyond my own comprehension. But you understand that, of course.

I have other propositions for a book, but have doubted the propriety of interfering with good newspaper engagements, except my way as an author could be demonstrated to be plain before me. But I know Richardson,

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and learned from him some months ago, something of an idea of the subscription plan of publishing. If that is your plan invariably, it looks safe.

I am on the N. Y. Tribune staff here as an "occasional," among other things, and a note from you addressed to

Very truly &c.

SAM L. CLEMENS,

New York Tribune Bureau, Washington, will find me, without fail.

The exchange of these two letters marked the beginning of one of the most notable publishing connections in American literary history. The book, however, was not begun immediately. Bliss was in poor health and final arrangements were delayed; it was not until late in January that Clemens went to Hartford and concluded the arrangement.

Meantime, fate had disclosed another matter of even greater importance; we get the first hint of it in the following letter, though to him its beginning had been earlier—on a day in the blue harbor of Smyrna, when young Charles Langdon, a fellow-passenger on the *Quaker City*, had shown to Mark Twain a miniature of young Langdon's sister at home:

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

224 F. STREET, WASH, *Jan. 8, 1868.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—And so the old Major has been there, has he? I would like mighty well to see him. I was a sort of benefactor to him once. I helped to snatch him out when he was about to ride into a Mohammedan Mosque in that queer old Moorish town of Tangier, in Africa. If he had got in, the Moors would have knocked his venerable old head off, for his temerity.

I have just arrived from New York—been there ever since Christmas staying at the house of Dan Slote—my Quaker City room-mate, and having a splendid time. Charley Langdon, Jack Van Nostrand, Dan and I, (all Quaker City night-hawks,) had a blow-out at Dan's house and a lively talk over old times. We went through

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the Holy Land together, and I just laughed till my sides ached, at some of our reminiscences. It was the unholiest gang that ever cavorted through Palestine, but those are the best boys in the world. We needed Moulton badly. I started to make calls, New Year's Day, but I anchored for the day at the first house I came to—Charlie Langdon's sister was there (beautiful girl,) and Miss Alice Hooker, another beautiful girl, a niece of Henry Ward Beecher's. We sent the old folks home early, with instructions not to send the carriage till midnight, and then I just staid there and worried the life out of those girls. I am going to spend a few days with the Langdon's in Elmira, New York, as soon as I get time, and a few days at Mrs. Hooker's in Hartford, Conn., shortly.

Henry Ward Beecher sent for me last Sunday to come over and dine (he lives in Brooklyn, you know,) and I went. Harriet Beecher Stowe was there, and Mrs. and Miss Beecher, Mrs. Hooker and my old Quaker City favorite, Emma Beach.

We had a very gay time, if it was Sunday. I expect I told more lies than I have told before in a month.

I went back by invitation, after the evening service, and finished the blow-out, and then staid all night at Mr. Beach's. Henry Ward is a brick.

I found out at 10 o'clock, last night, that I was to lecture tomorrow evening and so you must be aware that I have been working like sin all night to get a lecture written. I have finished it, I call it "Frozen Truth." It is a little top-heavy, though, because there is more truth in the title than there is in the lecture.

But thunder, I mustn't sit here writing all day, with so much business before me.

Good by, and kind regards to all.

Yrs affy

SAM L. CLEMENS.

Jack Van Nostrand of this letter is "Jack" of the *Innocents*. Emma Beach was the daughter of Moses S. Beach, of the New

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York *Sun*. Later she became the wife of the well-known painter, Abbot H. Thayer.

We do not hear of Miss Langdon again in the letters of that time, but it was not because she was absent from his thoughts. He had first seen her with her father and brother at the old St. Nicholas Hotel, on lower Broadway, where, soon after the arrival of the *Quaker City* in New York, he had been invited to dine. Long afterward he said: "It is forty years ago; from that day to this she has never been out of my mind."

From his next letter we learn of the lecture which apparently was delivered in Washington.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

WASH. *Jan. 9, 1868.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—That infernal lecture is over, thank Heaven! It came near being a villainous failure. It was not advertised at all. The manager was taken sick yesterday, and the man who was sent to tell me, never got to me till afternoon today. There was the dickens to pay. It was too late to do anything—too late to stop the lecture. I scared up a door-keeper, and was ready at the proper time, and by pure good luck a tolerably good house assembled and I was saved! I hardly knew what I was going to talk about, but it went off in splendid style. I was to have preached again Saturday night, but I won't—I can't get along without a manager.

I have been in New York ever since Christmas, you know, and now I shall have to work like sin to catch up my correspondence.

And I have got to get up that book, too. Cut my letters out of the Alta's and send them to me in an envelop. Some, here, that are not mailed yet, I shall have to copy, I suppose.

I have got a thousand things to do, and am not doing any of them. I feel perfectly savage.

Good bye

Yrs aff

SAM.

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On the whole, matters were going well with him. His next letter is full of his success—overflowing with the boyish radiance which he never quite outgrew.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

HARTFORD, CONN. *Jan. 24–68.*

DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—This is a good week for me. I stopped in the Herald office as I came through New York, to see the boys on the staff, and young James Gordon Bennett asked me to write twice a week, impersonally, for the *Herald*, and said if I would I might have full swing, and (write) about anybody and everybody I wanted to. I said I must have the very fullest possible swing, and he said "all right." I said "It's a contract—" and that settled that matter.

I'll make it a point to write *one* letter a week, any-how.

But the *best* thing that has happened was here. This great American Publishing Company kept on trying to bargain with me for a book till I thought I would cut the matter short by coming up for a *talk*. I met Rev. Henry Ward Beecher in Brooklyn, and with his usual whole-souled way of dropping his own work to give other people a lift when he gets a chance, he said, "Now, here, you are one of the talented men of the age—nobody is going to deny that—but in matters of business, I don't suppose you know more than enough to come in when it rains. I'll tell you what to do, and how to do it." And he did.

And I listened well, and then came up here and made a splendid contract for a Quaker City book of 5 or 600 large pages, with illustrations, the manuscript to be placed in the publishers' hands by the middle of July. My percentage is to be a fifth more than they have ever paid any author, except Horace Greeley. Beecher will be surprised, I guess, when he hears this.

But I had my mind made up to *one* thing—I wasn't going to touch a book unless there was *money* in it, and a good deal of it. I told them so. I had the misfortune to

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"bust out" one author of standing. They had his manuscript, with the understanding that they would publish his book if they could not get a book from me, (they only publish two books at a time, and so my book and Richardson's *Life of Grant* will fill the bill for next fall and winter) —so that manuscript was sent back to its author today.

These publishers get off the most tremendous editions of their books you can imagine. I shall write to the Enterprise and Alta every week, as usual, I guess, and to the Herald twice a week—occasionally to the Tribune and the Magazines (I have a stupid article in the Galaxy, just issued) but I am not going to write to this, that and the other paper any more.

The Chicago Tribune wants letters, but I hope and pray I have charged them so much that they will not close the contract. I am gradually getting out of debt, but these trips to New York do cost like sin. I hope you have cut out and forwarded my printed letters to Washington—please continue to do so as they arrive.

I have had a tip-top time, here, for a few days (guest of Mr. Jno. Hooker's family—Beecher's relatives—in a general way of Mr. Bliss, also, who is head of the publishing firm.) Puritans are mighty straight-laced and they won't let me smoke in the parlor, but the Almighty don't make any better people.

Love to all—good-bye. I shall be in New York 3 days—then go on to the Capital.

Yrs aff'ly, especially Ma.,

Yr SAM.

I have to make a speech at the annual Herald dinner on the 6th of May.

No formal contract for the book had been made when this letter was written. A verbal agreement between Bliss and Clemens had been reached, to be ratified by an exchange of letters in the near future. Bliss had made two propositions, *viz.*, ten thousand dollars, cash in hand, or a 5-per-cent. royalty

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on the selling price of the book. The cash sum offered looked very large to Mark Twain, and he was sorely tempted to accept it. He had faith, however, in the book, and in Bliss's ability to sell it. He agreed, therefore, to the royalty proposition; "The best business judgment I ever displayed" he often declared in after years. Five per cent. royalty sounds rather small in these days of more liberal contracts. But the American Publishing Company sold its books only by subscription, and the agents' commissions and delivery expenses ate heavily into the profits. Clemens was probably correct in saying that his percentage was larger than had been paid to any previous author except Horace Greeley. The John Hooker mentioned was the husband of Henry Ward Beecher's sister, Isabel. It was easy to understand the Beecher family's robust appreciation of Mark Twain.

From the office of Dan Slote, his room-mate of the *Quaker City*—"Dan" of the *Innocents*—Clemens wrote his letter that closed the agreement with Bliss.

To Elisha Bliss, Jr., in Hartford:

Office of SLOTE & WOODMAN, Blank Book Manufacturers,
Nos. 119 to 121 William St.
NEW YORK, *January 27, 1868.*

Mr. E. BLISS, Jr.
Sec'y American Publishing Co.
Hartford Conn.

DEAR SIR,—Your favor of Jan. 25th is received, and in reply, I will say that I accede to your several propositions, viz: That I furnish to the American Publishing Company, through you, with MSS sufficient for a volume of 500 to 600 pages, the subject to be the Quaker City, the voyage, description of places, &c., and also embodying the substance of the letters written by me during that trip, said MSS to be ready about the first of August, next, I to give all the usual and necessary attention in preparing said MSS for the press, and in preparation of illustrations, in correction of proofs—no use to be made by me of the material for this work in any way which will conflict with its interest—the book to be sold by the

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American Publishing Co., by subscription—and for said MS and labor on my part said Company to pay me a copyright of 5 percent, upon the subscription price of the book for all copies sold.

As further proposed by you, this understanding, herein set forth shall be considered a binding contract upon all parties concerned, all minor details to be arranged between us hereafter.

Very truly yours,
SAM. L. CLEMENS.

(Private and General.)

I was to have gone to Washington tonight, but have held over a day, to attend a dinner given by a lot of newspaper Editors and literary scalliwags, at the Westminster Hotel. Shall go down to-morrow, if I survive the banquet.

Yrs truly
SAM. CLEMENS.

Mark Twain, in Washington, was in line for political preferment. His wide acquaintance on the Pacific slope, his new fame and growing popularity, his powerful and dreaded pen, all gave him special distinction at the capital. From time to time the offer of one office or another tempted him, but he wisely, or luckily, resisted. In his letters home are presented some of his problems.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

224 F. STREET WASHINGTON *Feb. 6, 1868.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—For two months there have been some fifty applications before the government for the postmastership of San Francisco, which is the heaviest concentration of political power on the coast and consequently is a post which is much coveted.

When I found that a personal friend of mine, the Chief Editor of the Alta was an applicant I said I didn't

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want it—I would not take $10,000 a year out of a friend's pocket.

The two months have passed, I heard day before yesterday that a new and almost unknown candidate had suddenly turned up on the inside track, and was to be appointed at once. I didn't like that, and went after his case in a fine passion. I hunted up all our Senators and representatives and found that his name was actually to come from the President early in the morning.

Then Judge Field said if I wanted the place he could pledge me the President's appointment—and Senator Conness said he would *guarantee* me the Senate's confirmation. It was a great temptation, but it would render it impossible to fill my book contract, and I had to drop the idea.

I have to spend August and September in Hartford —which isn't San Francisco. Mr. Conness offers me any choice out of five influential California offices. Now, some day or other I shall want an office and then, just my luck, I can't get it, I suppose.

They want to send me abroad, as a Consul or a Minister. I said I didn't want any of the pie. God knows I am mean enough and lazy enough, now, without being a foreign consul.

Sometime in the course of the present century I think they will create a Commissioner of Patents, and then I hope to get a berth for Orion.

I published 6 or 7 letters in the Tribune while I was gone—now I cannot get them. I suppose I must have them copied.

Love to all

Yrs

SAM.

Orion Clemens was once more a candidate for office. Nevada had become a State, with regularly elected officials, and Orion had somehow missed being chosen. His day of authority had passed, and the law having failed to support him, he was again

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back at his old occupation, setting type in St. Louis. He was, as ever, full of dreams and inventions that would some day lead to fortune. With the gift of the Sellers imagination, inherited by all the family, he lacked the driving power which means achievement. More and more as the years went by he would lean upon his brother for moral and physical support. The chances for him in Washington do not appear to have been bright. The political situation under Andrew Johnson was not a happy one.

To Orion Clemens, in St. Louis:

224 F. STREET, WASH., *Feb. 21.* (*1868*)

MY DEAR BRO.,—I am glad you do not want the clerkship, for that Patent Office is in such a muddle that there would be no security for the permanency of a place in it. The same remark will apply to all offices here, now, and no doubt will, till the close of the present administration.

Any man who holds a place here, now, stands prepared at all times to vacate it. You are doing, now, exactly what I wanted you to do a year ago.

We chase phantoms half the days of our lives.

It is well if we learn wisdom even then, and save the other half.

I am in for it. I must go on chasing them—until I marry—*then* I am done with literature and all other bosh,—that is, literature wherewith to please the general public.

I shall write to please myself, then. I hope you *will* set type till you complete that invention, for surely government pap must be nauseating food for a *man*—a man whom God has enabled to saw wood and be independent. It really seemed to me a falling from grace, the idea of going back to San Francisco nothing better than a mere postmaster, albeit the public would have thought I came with gilded honors, and in great glory.

I only retain correspondence enough, now, to make a living for myself, and have discarded all else, so that I

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may have time to spare for the book. Drat the thing, I wish it were done, or that I had no other writing to do.

This is the place to get a poor opinion of everybody in. There isn't one man in Washington, in civil office, who has the brains of Anson Burlingame—and I suppose if China had not seized and saved his great talents to the world, this government would have discarded him when his time was up.

There are more pitiful intellects in this Congress! Oh, geeminy! There are few of them that I find pleasant enough company to visit.

I am most infernally tired of Wash. and its "attractions." To be *busy* is a man's only happiness—and I *am*—otherwise I should die

Yrs. aff

SAM.

The secretarial position with Senator Stewart was short-lived. One cannot imagine Mark Twain as anybody's secretary, and doubtless there was little to be gained on either side by the arrangement. They parted without friction, though in later years, when Stewart had become old and irascible, he used to recount a list of grievances and declare that he had been obliged to threaten violence in order to bring Mark to terms; but this was because the author of *Roughing It* had in that book taken liberties with the Senator, to the extent of an anecdote and portrait which, though certainly harmless enough, had for some reason given deep offense.

Mark Twain really had no time for secretary work. For one thing he was associated with John Swinton in supplying a Washington letter to a list of newspapers, and then he was busy collecting his *Quaker City* letters, and preparing the copy for his book. Matters were going well enough, when trouble developed from an unexpected quarter. The *Alta-California* had copyrighted the letters and proposed to issue them in book form. There had been no contract which would prevent this, and the correspondence which Clemens undertook with the *Alta* management led to nothing. He knew that he had powerful friends among the owners, if he could reach them personally, and he presently concluded to return to San Francisco, make what

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arrangement he could, and finish his book there. It was his fashion to be prompt; in his next letter we find him already on the way.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

AT SEA, *Sunday, March 15*, Lat. 25. (*1868*)

DEAR FOLKS,—I have nothing to write, except that I am well—that the weather is fearfully hot—that the Henry Chauncey is a magnificent ship—that we have twelve hundred passengers on board—that I have two state-rooms, and so am not crowded—that I have many pleasant friends here, and the people are not so stupid as on the Quaker City—that we had Divine Service in the main saloon at 10.30 this morning—that we expect to meet the upward bound vessel in Latitude 23, and this is why I am writing now.

We shall reach Aspinwall Thursday morning at 6 o'clock, and San Francisco less than two weeks later. I worry a great deal about being obliged to go without seeing you all, but it could not be helped.

Dan Slote, my splendid room-mate in the Quaker City and the noblest man on earth, will call to see you within a month. Make him dine with you and spend the evening. His house is my home always in New York.

Yrs affy, SAM.

The San Francisco trip proved successful. Once on the ground Clemens had little difficulty in convincing the *Alta* publishers that they had received full value in the newspaper use of the letters, and that the book rights remained with the author. A letter to Bliss conveys the situation.

To Elisha Bliss, Jr., in Hartford:

SAN FRANCISCO, *May 5, '68.*

E. BLISS, Jr. Esq.

DR. SIR,—The Alta people, after some hesitation, have given me permission to use my printed letters, and have

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ceased to think of publishing them themselves in book form. I am steadily at work, and shall start East with the completed Manuscript, about the middle of June.

I lectured here, on the trip, the other night—over sixteen hundred dollars in gold in the house—every seat taken and paid for before night.

Yrs truly,

MARK TWAIN.

But he did not sail in June. His friends persuaded him to cover his lecture circuit of two years before, telling the story of his travels. This he did with considerable profit, being everywhere received with great honors. He ended this tour with a second lecture in San Francisco, announced in a droll and characteristic fashion which delighted his Pacific admirers, and insured him a crowded house.[1]

His agreement had been to deliver his MS. about August 1st. Returning by the *Chauncey*, July 28th, he was two days later in Hartford, and had placed the copy for the new book in Bliss's hands. It was by no means a compilation of his newspaper letters. His literary vision was steadily broadening. All of the letters had been radically edited, some had been rewritten, some entirely eliminated. He probably thought very well of the book, an opinion shared by Bliss, but it is unlikely that either of them realized that it was to become a permanent classic, and the best selling book of travel for at least fifty years.

[1] See *Mark Twain: A Biography*, chap. xlvi, and Appendix H.

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IX

LETTERS 1868-70. COURTSHIP, AND "THE INNOCENTS ABROAD"

THE story of Mark Twain's courtship has been fully told in the completer story of his life; it need only be briefly sketched here as a setting for the letters of this period. In his letter of January 8th we note that he expects to go to Elmira for a few days as soon as he has time.

But he did not have time, or perhaps did not receive a pressing invitation until he had returned with his MS. from California. Then, through young Charles Langdon, his *Quaker City* shipmate, he was invited to Elmira. The invitation was given for a week, but through a subterfuge—unpremeditated, and certainly fair enough in a matter of love—he was enabled to considerably prolong his visit. By the end of his stay he had become really "like one of the family," though certainly not yet accepted as such. The fragmentary letter that follows reflects something of his pleasant situation. The Mrs. Fairbanks mentioned in this letter had been something more than a "shipmother" to Mark Twain. She was a woman of fine literary taste, and *Quaker City* correspondent for her husband's paper, the Cleveland *Herald*. She had given Mark Twain sound advice as to his letters, which he had usually read to her, and had in no small degree modified his early natural tendency to exaggeration and outlandish humor. He owed her much, and never failed to pay her tribute.

Part of a letter to Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

ELMIRA, N.Y. *Aug. 24, 1868.*

DEAR FOLKS,—You see I am progressing—though slowly. I shall be here a week yet—maybe two—for Charlie Langdon cannot get away until his father's chief

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business man returns from a journey—and a visit to Mrs. Fairbanks, at Cleveland, would lose half its pleasure if Charlie were not along. Moulton of St. Louis ought to be there too. We three were Mrs. F's "cubs," in the Quaker City. She took good care that we were at church regularly on Sundays; at the 8-bells prayer meeting every night; and she kept our buttons sewed on and our clothing in order—and in a word was as busy and considerate, and as watchful over her family of uncouth and unruly cubs, and as patient and as long-suffering, withal, as a natural mother. So we expect . . .

Aug. 25th.

Didn't finish yesterday. Something called me away. I am most comfortably situated here. This is the pleasantest family I ever knew. I only have one trouble, and that is they give me too much thought and too much time and invention to the object of making my visit pass delightfully. It needs——

Just how and when he left the Langdon home the letters do not record. Early that fall he began a lecture engagement with James Redpath, proprietor of the Boston Lyceum Bureau, and his engagements were often within reach of Elmira. He had a standing invitation now to the Langdon home, and the end of the week often found him there. Yet when at last he proposed for the hand of Livy Langdon the acceptance was by no means prompt. He was a favorite in the Langdon household, but his suitability as a husband for the frail and gentle daughter was questioned.

However, he was carrying everything, just then, by storm. The largest houses everywhere were crowded to hear him. Papers spoke of him as the coming man of the age, people came to their doors to see him pass. There is but one letter of this period, but it gives us the picture.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

CLEVELAND, *Nov. 20, 1868.*

DEAR FOLKS,—I played against the Eastern favorite, Fanny Kemble, in Pittsburgh, last night. She had 200

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in her house, and I had upwards of 1,500. All the seats were sold (in a driving rain storm, 3 days ago,) as reserved seats at 25 cents extra, even those in the second and third tiers—and when the last seat was gone the box office had not been open more than 2 hours. When I reached the theatre they were turning people away and the house was crammed, 150 or 200 stood up, all the evening.

I go to Elmira tonight. I am simply lecturing for societies, at $100 a pop.

Yrs

SAM.

It would be difficult for any family to refuse relationship with one whose star was so clearly ascending, especially when every inclination was in his favor, and the young lady herself encouraged his suit. A provisional engagement was presently made, but it was not finally ratified until February of the following year. Then in a letter from one of his lecture points he tells his people something of his happiness.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis:

LOCKPORT, N. Y. *Feb. 27, 1869.*

DEAR FOLKS,—I enclose $20 for Ma. I thought I was getting ahead of her little assessments of $35 a month, but find I am falling behind with her instead, and have let her go without money. Well, I did not mean to do it. But you see when people have been getting ready for months in a quiet way to get married, they are bound to grow stingy, and go to saving up money against that awful day when it is sure to be needed. I am particularly anxious to place myself in a position where I can carry on my married life in good shape on *my own hook*, because I have paddled my own canoe so long that I could not be satisfied now to let anybody help me—and my proposed father-in-law is naturally so liberal that it would be just like him to want to give us a start in life. But I don't want it that way. I can start myself. I don't want

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any help. I can run this institution without any outside assistance, and I shall have a wife who will stand by me like a soldier through thick and thin, and never complain. She is only a little body, but she hasn't her peer in Christendom. I gave her only a plain gold engagement ring, when fashion imperatively demands a two-hundred dollar diamond one, and told her it was typical of her future lot—namely, that she would have to flourish on substantials rather than luxuries. (But you see I know the girl—she don't care anything about luxuries.) She is a splendid girl. She spends no money but her usual year's allowance, and she spends nearly every cent of that on other people. She will be a good sensible little wife, without any airs about her. I don't make intercession for her beforehand and ask you to love her, for there isn't any use in that—you couldn't help it if you were to try.

I warn you that whoever comes within the fatal influence of her beautiful nature is her willing slave for evermore. I take my affidavit on that statement. Her father and mother and brother embrace and pet her constantly, precisely as if she were a *sweetheart*, instead of a blood relation. She has unlimited power over her father, and yet she never uses it except to make him help people who stand in need of help. . . .

But if I get fairly started on the subject of my bride, I never shall get through—and so I will quit right here. I went to Elmira a little over a week ago, and staid four days and then had to go to New York on business.

. . . . . .

No further letters have been preserved until June, when he is in Elmira and with his fiancèe reading final proofs on the new book. They were having an idyllic good time, of course, but it was a useful time, too, for Olivia Langdon had a keen and refined literary instinct, and the *Innocents Abroad*, as well as Mark Twain's other books, are better to-day for her influence.

It has been stated that Mark Twain loved the lecture platform, but from his letters we see that even at this early date,

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when he was at the height of his first great vogue as a public entertainer, he had no love for platform life. Undoubtedly he rejoiced in the brief periods when he was actually before his audience and could play upon it with his master touch, but the dreary intermissions of travel and broken sleep were too heavy a price to pay.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and family, in St. Louis

ELMIRA, *June 4.* (*1869*)

DEAR FOLKS,—Livy sends you her love and loving good wishes, and I send you mine. The last 3 chapters of the book came tonight—we shall read it in the morning and then thank goodness, we are *done*.

In twelve months (or rather I believe it is fourteen,) I have earned just *eighty dollars* by my pen—two little magazine squibs and one newspaper letter—altogether the idlest, laziest 14 months I ever spent in my life. And in that time my *absolute* and *necessary* expenses have been scorchingly heavy—for I have now less than three thousand six hundred dollars in bank out of the eight or nine thousand I have made during those months, lecturing. My expenses were something frightful during the winter. I feel ashamed of my idleness, and yet I have had really *no* inclination to do anything but court Livy. I haven't any other inclination *yet*. I have determined not to work as hard traveling, any more, as I did last winter, and so I have resolved not to lecture outside of the 6 New England States next winter. My Western course would easily amount to $10,000, but I would rather make 2 or 3 thousand in New England than submit again to so much wearing travel. (I *have* promised to talk ten nights for a thousand dollars in the State of New York, provided the places are close together.) But after all if I get located in a newspaper in a way to suit me, in the meantime, I don't want to lecture *at all* next winter, and probably shan't. I most cordially hate the lecture field. And after all, I shudder to think that I may never get out of it.

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In all conversations with Gough, and Anna Dickinson, Nasby, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Wendell Phillips and the other old stagers, I could not observe that *they* ever expected or hoped to get out of the business. *I* don't want to get wedded to it as they are. Livy thinks we can live on a very moderate sum and that we'll not need to lecture. I know very well that she can live on a small allowance, but I am not so sure about myself. I can't scare her by reminding her that her father's family expenses are forty thousand dollars a year, because she produces the documents at once to show that precious little of this outlay is on *her* account. But I must not commence writing about Livy, else I shall never stop. There isn't such another little piece of perfection in the world as she is.

My time is become so short, now, that I doubt if I get to California this summer. If I manage to buy into a paper, I think I will visit you a while and not go to Cal. at all. I shall know something about it after my next trip to Hartford. We all go there on the 10th—the whole family—to attend a wedding, on the 17th. I am offered an interest in a Cleveland paper which would pay me $2,300 to $2,500 a year, and a salary added of $3,000. The salary is fair enough, but the interest is not large enough, and so I must look a little further. The Cleveland folks say they *can* be induced to do a little better by me, and urge me to come out and talk business. But it don't strike me—I feel little or no inclination to go.

I believe I haven't anything else to write, and it is bed-time. I want to write to Orion, but I keep putting it off—I keep putting *every*thing off. Day after day Livy and I are together all day long and until 10 at night, and then I feel dreadfully sleepy. If Orion will bear with me and forgive me I will square up with him yet. I will even let him kiss Livy.

My love to Mollie and Annie and Sammie and all. Good-bye.

Affectionately,

SAM.

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It is curious, with his tendency to optimism and general expansion of futures, that he says nothing of the possible sales of the new book, or of his expectations in that line. It was issued in July, and by June the publishers must have had promising advance orders from their canvassers; but apparently he includes none of these chickens in his financial forecast. Even when the book had been out a full month, and was being shipped at the rate of several hundreds a day, he makes no reference to it in a letter to his sister, other than to ask if she has not received a copy. This, however, was a Mark Twain peculiarity. Writing was his trade; the returns from it seldom excited him. It was only when he drifted into strange and untried fields that he began to chase rainbows, to blow iridescent bubbles, and count unmined gold.

To Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

BUFFALO, *Aug. 20, 1869.*

MY DEAR SISTER,—I have only time to write a line. I got your letter this morning and mailed it to Livy. She will be expecting me tonight and I am sorry to disappoint her so, but then I couldn't well get away. I will go next Saturday.

I have bundled up Livy's picture and will try and recollect to mail it tomorrow. It is a porcelaintype and I think you will like it.

I am sorry I never got to St. Louis, because I may be too busy to go, for a long time. But I have been busy all the time and St. Louis is clear out of the way, and remote from the world and all ordinary routes of travel. You must not place too much weight upon this idea of moving the capital from Washington. St. Louis is in some respects a better place for it than Washington, though there isn't more than a toss-up between the two after all. One is dead and the other in a trance. Washington *is* in the centre of population and business, while St. Louis is far removed from both. And you know there is no *geographical* centre any more. The railroads and telegraph have done away with all that. It is no longer

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a matter of sufficient importance to be gravely considered by thinking men. The only *centres*, now, are narrowed down to those of intelligence, capital and population. As I said before Washington is the nearest to those—and you don't have to paddle across a river on ferry boats of a pattern popular in the dark ages to get to it, nor have to clamber up vilely paved hills in rascally omnibuses along with a herd of all sorts of people after you are there. Secondly, the removal of the capital is one of those old, regular, reliable dodges that are the bread and meat of back country congressmen. It is agitated *every* year. It always has been, it always will be;—It is not new in any respect. *Thirdly*. The Capitol has cost $40,000,000 already and lacks a good deal of being finished, yet. There are single stones in the Treasury building (and a good many of them) that cost twenty-seven thousand dollars apiece—and millions were spent in the construction of that and the Patent Office and the other great government buildings. To move to St. Louis, the country must throw away a hundred millions of capital invested in those buildings, and go right to work to spend a hundred millions on new buildings in St. Louis. Shall we ever have a Congress, a majority of whose members are hopelessly insane? Probably not. But it is possible—unquestionably such a thing is possible. Only I don't believe it will happen in our time; and I am satisfied the capital will not be moved until it *does* happen. But if St. Louis would donate the ground and the buildings, it would be a different matter. No, Pamela, I don't see any good reason to believe you or I will ever see the capital moved.

I have twice instructed the publishers to send you a book—it was the first thing I did—long before the proofs were finished. Write me if it is not yet done.

Livy says we *must* have you all at our marriage,—and I say we can't. It will be at Christmas or New Years, when such a trip across the country would be equivalent to murder & arson & everything else.—And it would cost

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five hundred dollars—an amount of money she don't know the value of now, but will before a year is gone. She grieves over it, poor little rascal, but it can't be helped. She must wait awhile, till I am firmly on my legs, & then she shall see you. She says her father and mother will *invite* you just as soon as the wedding date is definitely fixed, *any*way—& she thinks that's *bound* to settle it. But the ice & snow, & the long hard journey, & the injudiciousness of laying out any money except what we are *obliged* to part with while we are so much in debt, settles the case differently. For it *is* a debt.

. . . Mr. Langdon is just as good as bound for $25,000 for me, and has already advanced half of it in cash. I wrote and asked whether I had better send him my note, or a due-bill, or how he would prefer to have the indebtedness made of record and he answered every *other* topic in the letter pleasantly but never replied to that at all. Still, I shall give my note into the hands of his business agent here, and pay him the interest as it falls due. We must "go slow." We are not in the Cleveland Herald. We are a hundred thousand times better off, but there isn't so much money in it.

(Remainder missing.)

In spite of the immediate success of his book—a success the like of which had scarcely been known in America—Mark Twain held himself to be, not a literary man, but a journalist. He had no plans for another book; as a newspaper owner and editor he expected, with his marriage, to settle down and devote the rest of his life to journalism. The paper was the Buffalo *Express;* his interest in it was one-third—the purchase price, twenty-five thousand dollars, of which he had paid a part, Jervis Langdon, his future father-in-law, having furnished cash and security for the remainder. He was already in possession in August, but he was not regularly in Buffalo that autumn, for he had agreed with Redpath to deliver his *Quaker City* lecture, and the tour would not end until a short time before his wedding-day, February 2, 1870.

Our next letter hardly belongs in this collection, as it was

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doubtless written with at least the possibility of publication in view. But it is too amusing, too characteristic of Mark Twain, to be omitted. It was sent in response to an invitation from the New York Society of California Pioneers to attend a banquet given in New York City, October 13, 1869, and was, of course, read to the assembled diners.

To the New York Society of California Pioneers, in New York City:

ELMIRA, *October 11, 1869.*

GENTLEMEN,—Circumstances render it out of my power to take advantage of the invitation extended to me through Mr. Simonton, and be present at your dinner at New York. I regret this very much, for there are several among you whom I would have a right to join hands with on the score of old friendship, and I suppose I would have a sublime general right to shake hands with the rest of you on the score of kinship in California ups and downs in search of fortune.

If I were to tell some of my experience, you would recognize California blood in me; I fancy the old, old story would sound familiar, no doubt. I have the usual stock of reminiscences. For instance: I went to Esmeralda early. I purchased largely in the "Wide West," "Winnemucca," and other fine claims, and was very wealthy. I fared sumptuously on bread when flour was $200 a barrel and had beans for dinner every Sunday, when none but bloated aristocrats could afford such grandeur. But I finished by feeding batteries in a quartz mill at $15 a week, and wishing I was a battery myself and had somebody to feed me. My claims in Esmeralda are there yet. I suppose I could be persuaded to sell.

I went to Humboldt District when it was new; I became largely interested in the "Alba Nueva" and other claims with gorgeous names, and was rich again—in prospect. I owned a vast mining property there. I would not have sold out for less than $400,000 at that time. But I will now. Finally I walked home—200 miles—

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partly for exercise, and partly because stage fare was expensive. Next I entered upon an affluent career in Virginia City, and by a judicious investment of labor and the capital of friends, became the owner of about all the worthless wild cat mines there were in that part of the country. Assessments did the business for me there. There were a hundred and seventeen assessments to one dividend, and the proportion of income to outlay was a little against me. My financial barometer went down to 32 Fahrenheit, and the subscriber was frozen out.

I took up extensions on the main lead—extensions that reached to British America in one direction, and to the Isthmus of Panama in the other—and I verily believe I would have been a rich man if I had ever found those infernal extensions. But I didn't. I ran tunnels till I tapped the Arctic Ocean, and I sunk shafts till I broke through the roof of perdition; but those extensions turned up missing every time. I am willing to sell all that property and throw in the improvements.

Perhaps you remember that celebrated "North Ophir?" I bought that mine. It was very rich in pure silver. You could take it out in lumps as large as a filbert. But when it was discovered that those lumps were melted half dollars, and hardly melted at that, a painful case of "salting" was apparent, and the undersigned adjourned to the poorhouse again.

I paid assessments on "Hale and Norcross" until they sold me out, and I had to take in washing for a living—and the next month that infamous stock went up to $7,000 a foot.

I own millions and millions of feet of affluent silver leads in Nevada—in fact the entire undercrust of that country nearly, and if Congress would move that State off my property so that I could get at it, I would be wealthy yet. But no, there she squats—and here am I. Failing health persuades me to sell. If you know of any one desiring a permanent investment, I can furnish one that will have the virtue of being eternal.

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I have been through the California mill, with all its "dips, spurs and angles, variations and sinuosities." I have worked there at all the different trades and professions known to the catalogues. I have been everything, from a newspaper editor down to a cow-catcher on a locomotive, and I am encouraged to believe that if there had been a few more occupations to experiment on, I might have made a dazzling success at last, and found out what mysterious designs Providence had in creating me.

But you perceive that although I am not a Pioneer, I have had a sufficiently variegated time of it to enable me to talk Pioneer like a native, and feel like a Forty-Niner. Therefore, I cordially welcome you to your old-remembered homes and your long deserted firesides, and close this screed with the sincere hope that your visit here will be a happy one, and not embittered by the sorrowful surprises that absence and lapse of years are wont to prepare for wanderers; surprises which come in the form of old friends missed from their places; silence where familiar voices should be; the young grown old; change and decay everywhere; home a delusion and a disappointment; strangers at hearthstone; sorrow where gladness was; tears for laughter; the melancholy pomp of death where the grace of life has been!

With all good wishes for the Returned Prodigals, and regrets that I cannot partake of a small piece of the fatted calf (rare and no gravy,)

I am yours, cordially,

MARK TWAIN.

In the next letter we find him in the midst of a sort of confusion of affairs, which, in one form or another, would follow him throughout the rest of his life. It was the price of his success and popularity, combined with his general gift for being concerned with a number of things, and a natural tendency for getting into hot water, which becomes more evident as the years and letters pass in review. Orion Clemens, in his attempt

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to save money for the government, had employed methods and agents which the officials at Washington did not understand, and refused to recognize. Instead of winning the credit and commendation he had expected, he now found himself pursued by claims of considerable proportions. The "land" referred to is the Tennessee tract, the heritage which John Clemens had provided for his children. Mark Twain had long since lost faith in it, and was not only willing, but eager to renounce his rights.

"Nasby" is, of course, David R. Locke, of the Toledo *Blade*, whose popularity at this time both as a lecturer and writer was very great. Clemens had met him here and there on their platform tour, and they had become good friends. Clemens, in fact, had once proposed to Nasby a joint trip to the Pacific coast.

The California idea had been given up, but both Mark Twain and Nasby found engagements enough, and sufficient profit east of the Mississippi. Boston was often their headquarters that winter ('69 and '70), and they were much together. "Josh Billings," another of Redpath's lecturers, was likewise often to be found in the Lyceum offices. There is a photograph of Mark Twain, Nasby, and Josh Billings together.

Clemens also, that winter, met William Dean Howells, then in the early days of his association with the *Atlantic Monthly*. The two men, so widely different, became firm friends at sight, and it was to Howells in the years to come that Mark Twain would write more letters, and more characteristic letters, than to any other living man. Howells had favorably reviewed *The Innocents Abroad*, and after the first moment of their introduction had passed Clemens said: "When I read that review of yours I felt like the woman who said that she was so glad that her baby had come white." It was not the sort of thing that Howells would have said, but it was the sort of thing that he could understand and appreciate from Mark Twain.

In company with Nasby, Clemens, that season, also met Oliver Wendell Holmes. Later he had sent Holmes a copy of his book and received a pleasantly appreciative reply. "I always like," wrote Holmes, "to hear what one of my fellow-countrymen, who is not a Hebrew scholar, or a reader of hieroglyphics, but a good-humored traveler with a pair of sharp, twinkling Yankee (in the broader sense) eyes in his head, has to

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say about the things that learned travelers often make unintelligible, and sentimental ones ridiculous or absurd.... I hope your booksellers will sell a hundred thousand copies of your travels." A wish that was realized in due time, though it is doubtful if Doctor Holmes or any one else at the moment believed that a book of that nature and price (it was $3.50 a copy) would ever reach such a sale.

To Mrs. Moffett, in St. Louis:

BOSTON, *Nov. 9, 1869.*

MY DEAR SISTER,—Three or four letters just received from home. My first impulse was to send Orion a check on my publisher for the money he wants, but a sober second thought suggested that if he has not defrauded the government out of money, why pay, simply because the government chooses to consider him in its debt? No. Right is right. The idea don't suit me. Let him write the Treasury the state of the case, and tell them he has no money. *If* they make his sureties pay, *then* I will make the sureties whole, but I won't pay a cent of an unjust claim. You talk of disgrace. To my mind it would be just as disgraceful to allow one's self to be bullied into paying that which is unjust.

Ma thinks it is hard that Orion's share of the land should be swept away just as it is right on the point (as it always *has* been) of becoming valuable. Let her rest easy on that point. This letter is his ample authority to sell *my* share of the land *immediately* and appropriate the proceeds—giving no account to *me*, but repaying the amount to Ma first, or in case of her death, to you or your heirs, whenever in the future he shall be able to do it. Now, I want no hesitation in this matter. I renounce my ownership from this date, *for this purpose*, provided it is sold just as suddenly as he can sell it.

In the next place—Mr. Langdon is old, and is trying hard to withdraw from business and seek repose. I will not burden him with a purchase—but I will ask him to

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take full possession of a coal tract of the land without paying a cent, simply conditioning that he shall mine and throw the coal into market at his own cost, and pay to you and all of you what he thinks is a fair portion of the profits accruing—you can do as you please with the rest of the land. Therefore, send me (to Elmira,) information about the coal deposits so framed that he can comprehend the matter and can intelligently instruct an agent how to find it and go to work.

Tomorrow night I appear for the first time before a Boston audience—4,000 critics—and on the success of this matter depends my future success in New England. But I am not distressed. Nasby is in the same boat. Tonight decides the fate of his brand-new lecture. He has just left my room—been reading his lecture to me—was greatly depressed. I have convinced him that he has little to fear.

I get just about five hundred more applications to lecture than I can possibly fill—and in the West they say "Charge all you please, but *come*." I shan't go West at all. I stop lecturing the 22d of January, *sure*. But I shall talk every night up to that time. They flood me with high-priced invitations to write for magazines and papers, and publishers besiege me to write books. Can't do *any* of these things.

I am twenty-two thousand dollars in debt, and shall earn the money and pay it within two years—and therefore I am not spending any money except when it is *necessary*.

I had my life insured for $10,000 yesterday (what ever became of Mr. Moffett's life insurance?) "for the benefit of my natural heirs"—the same being my mother, for Livy wouldn't claim it, you may be sure of that. This has taken $200 out of my pocket which I was going to send to Ma. But I will send her some, soon. Tell Orion to keep a stiff upper lip—when the worst comes to the worst I will come forward. Must talk in Providence, R. I., tonight. Must leave now. I thank Mollie and

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Orion and the rest for your letters, but you see how I am pushed—ought to have 6 clerks.

Affectionately,

SAM.

By the end of January, 1870, more than thirty thousand copies of the *Innocents* had been sold, and in a letter to his publisher the author expressed his satisfaction.

To Elisha Bliss, in Hartford:

ELMIRA, *Jan. 28 '70.*

FRIEND BLISS,— . . . Yes, I *am* satisfied with the way you are running the book. You are running it in staving, tip-top, first-class style. I never wander into any corner of the country but I find that an agent has been there before me, and many of that community have read the book. And on an average about ten people a day come and hunt me up to thank me and tell me I'm a benefactor! I guess this is a part of the programme we didn't expect in the first place.

I think you are rushing this book in a manner to be proud of; and you will make the finest success of it that has ever been made with a subscription book, I believe. What with advertising, establishing agencies, &c., you have got an enormous lot of machinery under way and hard at work in a wonderfully short space of time. It is easy to see, when one travels around, that one must be endowed with a deal of genuine generalship in order to maneuvre a publication whose line of battle stretches from end to end of a great continent, and whose foragers and skirmishers invest every hamlet and besiege every village hidden away in all the vast space between.

I'll back you against any publisher in America, Bliss —or elsewhere.

Yrs as ever

CLEMENS.

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There is another letter written just at this time which of all letters must not be omitted here. Only five years earlier Mark Twain, poor, and comparatively unknown, had been carrying water while Jim Gillis and Dick Stoker washed out the pans of dirt in search of the gold pocket which they did not find. Clemens must have received a letter fom Gillis referring to some particular occasion, but it has disappeared; the reply, however, always remained one of James Gillis's treasured possessions.

To James Gillis, in his cabin on Jackass Hill, Tuolumne Co., California:

ELMIRA, N. Y. *Jan. 26, '70.*

DEAR JIM,—I remember that old night just as well! And somewhere among my relics I have your remembrance stored away. It makes my heart ache yet to call to mind some of those days. Still, it shouldn't—for right in the depths of their poverty and their pocket-hunting vagabondage lay the germ of my coming good fortune. You remember the one gleam of jollity that shot across our dismal sojourn in the rain and mud of Angels' Camp—I mean that day we sat around the tavern stove and heard that chap tell about the frog and how they filled him with shot. And you remember how we quoted from the yarn and laughed over it, out there on the hillside while you and dear old Stoker panned and washed. I jotted the story down in my note-book that day, and would have been glad to get ten or fifteen dol ars for it—I was just that blind. But then we were so hard up! I published that story, and it became widely known in America, India, China, England—and the reputation it made for me has paid me thousands and thousands of dollars since. Four or five months ago I bought into the Express (I have ordered it sent to you as long as you live—and if the book-keeper sends you any bills, you let me hear of it.) I went heavily in debt—never could have dared to do that, Jim, if we hadn't heard the Jumping Frog story that day.

And wouldn't I love to take old Stoker by the hand,

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and wouldn't I love to see him in his great specialty, his wonderful rendition of "Rinalds" in the "Burning Shame!" Where is Dick and what is he doing? Give him my fervent love and warm old remembrances.

A week from today I shall be married—to a girl even better, and lovelier than the peerless "Chapparal Quails." You can't come so far, Jim, but still I cordially *invite* you to come, anyhow—and I invite Dick, too. And if you two boys *were* to land here on that pleasant occasion, we would make you right royally welcome.

Truly your friend,

SAML L. CLEMENS.

P. S.—"California plums are good, Jim—particularly when they are stewed."

Steve Gillis, who sent a copy of his letter to the writer, added:

"Dick Stoker—dear, gentle unselfish old Dick—died over three years ago, aged 78. I am sure it will be a melancholy pleasure to Mark to know that Dick lived in comfort all his later life, sincerely loved and respected by all who knew him. He never left Jackass Hill. He struck a pocket years ago containing enough not only to build himself a comfortable house near his old cabin, but to last him, without work, to his painless end. He was a Mason, and was buried by the Order in Sonora.

"The 'Quails'—the beautiful, the innocent, the wild little Quails—lived way out in the Chapparal, on a little ranch near the Stanislaus River, with their father and mother. They were famous for their beauty and had many suitors."

The mention of "California plums" refers to some inedible fruit which Gillis once, out of pure goodness of heart, bought of a poor wandering squaw, and then, to conceal his motive, declared that they were something rare and fine, and persisted in eating them, though even when stewed they nearly choked him.

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X

LETTERS 1870–71. MARK TWAIN IN BUFFALO. MARRIAGE. THE BUFFALO EXPRESS. "MEMORANDA." LECTURES. A NEW BOOK

SAMUEL L. CLEMENS and Olivia Langdon were married in the Langdon home at Elmira, February 2, 1870, and took up their residence in Buffalo in a beautiful home, a wedding present from the bride's father. The story of their wedding, and the amusing circumstances connected with their establishment in Buffalo, have been told elsewhere.[1]

Mark Twain now believed that he was through with lecturing. Two letters to Redpath, his agent, express his comfortable condition.

To James Redpath, in Boston:

BUFFALO, *March 22, 1870.*

DEAR RED,—I am not going to lecture any more forever. I have got things ciphered down to a fraction now. I know just about what it will cost us to live and I can make the money without lecturing. Therefore old man, count me out.

Your friend,

S. L. CLEMENS.

To James Redpath, in Boston:

ELMIRA, N. Y. *May 10, 1870.*

FRIEND REDPATH,—I guess I am out of the field permanently.

Have got a lovely wife; a lovely house, bewitchingly

[1] *Mark Twain: A Biography*, chap. lxxiv.

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furnished; a lovely carriage, and a coachman whose style and dignity are simply awe-inspiring—nothing less—and I am making more money than necessary—by considerable, and therefore why crucify myself nightly on the platform. The subscriber will have to be excused from the present season at least.

Remember me to Nasby, Billings and Fall.[1] Luck to you! I am going to print your menagerie, Parton and all, and make comments.

In next Galaxy I give Nasby's friend and mine from Philadelphia (John Quill, a literary thief) a "hyste."

Yours always and after.

MARK.

The reference to the *Galaxy* in the foregoing letter has to do with a department called *Memoranda*, which he had undertaken to conduct for the new magazine. This work added substantially to his income, and he believed it would be congenial. He was allowed free hand to write and print what he chose, and some of his best work at this time was published in the new department, which he continued for a year.

Mark Twain now seemed to have his affairs well regulated. His mother and sister were no longer far away in St. Louis. Soon after his marriage they had, by his advice, taken up residence at Fredonia, New York, where they could be easily visited from Buffalo.

Altogether, the outlook seemed bright to Mark Twain and his wife, during the first months of their marriage. Then there came a change. In a letter which Clemens wrote to his mother and sister we get the first chapter of disaster.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens, and Mrs. Moffett, in Fredonia, N. Y.:

ELMIRA, N. Y. *June 25, 1870.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—We were called here suddenly by telegram, 3 days ago. Mr. Langdon is very low. We have well-nigh lost hope—all of us except Livy.

[1] Redpath's partner in the lecture lyceum.

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Mr. Langdon, whose hope is one of his most prominent characteristics, says himself, this morning, that his recovery is only a *possibility*, not a probability. He made his will this morning—that is, appointed executors—nothing else was necessary. The household is sad enough. Charley is in Bavaria. We telegraphed Munroe & Co. Paris, to notify Charley to come home—they sent the message to Munich. Our message left here at 8 in the morning and Charley's answer arrived less than eight hours afterward. He sailed immediately.

He will reach home two weeks from now. The whole city is troubled. As I write (at the office,) a dispatch arrives from Charley who has reached London, and will sail thence on 28th. He wants news. We cannot send him any.

Affectionately

SAM.

P. S. I sent $300 to Fredonia Bank for Ma—It is in her name.

Mrs. Clemens, herself, was not in the best of health at this time, but devotion to her father took her to his bedside, where she insisted upon standing long, hard watches, the strain of which told upon her severely. Meantime, work must go on; the daily demand of the newspaper and the monthly call of the *Memoranda* could not go unheeded. Also, Bliss wanted a new book, and met Mark Twain at Elmira to arrange for it. In a letter to Orion we learn of this project.

To Orion Clemens, in St. Louis:

ELMIRA, *July 15, 1870*

MY DEAR BRO.,—Per contract I must have another 600-page book ready for my publisher Jan. 1, and I only began it today. The subject of it is a secret, because I may possibly change it. But as it stands, I propose to do up Nevada and Cal., beginning with the trip across the country in the stage. Have you a memorandum of

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the route we took—or the names of any of the Stations we stopped at? Do you remember any of the scenes, names, incidents or adventures of the coach trip?—for I remember next to *nothing* about the matter. Jot down a foolscap page of items for me. I wish I could have two days' talk with you.

I suppose I am to get the biggest copyright, this time, ever paid on a subscription book in this country.

Give our love to Mollie.—Mr. Langdon is very low.

Yr Bro SAM.

The "biggest copyright," mentioned in this letter, was a royalty of 7½ per cent., which Bliss had agreed to pay, on the retail price of the book. The book was *Roughing It*, though this title was not decided upon until considerably later. Orion Clemens eagerly furnished a detailed memorandum of the route of their overland journey, which brought this enthusiastic acknowledgment:

To Orion Clemens, in St. Louis:

BUF., *1870.*

DEAR BRO.,—I find that your little memorandum book is going to be ever so much use to me, and will enable me to make quite a coherent narrative of the Plains journey instead of slurring it over and jumping 2,000 miles at a stride. The book I am writing will sell. In return for the use of the little memorandum book I shall take the greatest pleasure in forwarding to you the third $1,000 which the publisher of the forthcoming work sends me —or the *first* $1,000, I am not particular—they will both be in the first quarterly statement of account from the publisher.

In great haste,

Yr Obliged Bro.

SAM.

Love to Mollie. We are all getting along tolerably well.

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Mr. Langdon died early in August, and Mrs. Clemens returned to Buffalo, exhausted in mind and body. If she hoped for rest now, in the quiet of her own home, she was disappointed, as the two brief letters that follow clearly show.

To Mrs. Moffett, in Fredonia, N. Y.:

BUFFALO, *Aug. 31, '70.*

MY DEAR SISTER,—I know I ought to be thrashed for not writing you, but I have kept putting it off. We get heaps of letters every day; it is a comfort to have somebody like you that will let us shirk and be patient over it. We got the book and I *did* think I wrote a line thanking you for it—but I suppose I neglected it.

We are getting along tolerably well. Mother [Mrs. Langdon] is here, and Miss Emma Nye. Livy cannot sleep since her father's death—but I give her a narcotic every night and *make* her. I am just as busy as I can be—am still writing for the Galaxy and also writing a book like the "Innocents" in size and style. I have got my work ciphered down to *days*, and I haven't a single day to spare between this and the date which, by written contract I am to deliver the M.S. of the book to the publisher. ——In a hurry

Affectionately

SAM.

To Orion Clemens, in St. Louis:

BUF. *Sept. 9th, 1870.*

MY DEAR BRO,—O here! I don't want to be consulted at all about Tenn. I don't want it even mentioned to me. When I make a suggestion it is for you to act upon it or throw it aside, but I beseech you never to ask my advice, opinion or consent about that hated property. If it was because I felt the slightest personal interest in the infernal land that I *ever* made a suggestion, the suggestion would never be made.

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Do exactly as you please with the land—always remember this—that so trivial a percentage as ten per cent will never sell it.

It is only a bid for a somnambulist.

I have no time to turn round, a young lady visitor (schoolmate of Livy's) is dying in the house of typhoid fever (parents are in South Carolina) and the premises are full of nurses and doctors and we are all fagged out.

Yrs. SAM.

Miss Nye, who had come to cheer her old schoolmate, had been prostrated with the deadly fever soon after her arrival. Another period of anxiety and nursing followed. Mrs. Clemens, in spite of her frail health, devoted much time to her dying friend, until by the time the end came she was herself in a precarious condition. This was at the end of September. A little more than a month later, November 7th, her first child, Langdon Clemens, was prematurely born. To the Rev. Joseph H. Twichell and wife, of Hartford, Mark Twain characteristically announced the new arrival.

To Rev. Joseph H. Twichell and wife, in Hartford, Conn.:

BUFFALO, *Nov 12, '70.*

DEAR UNCLE AND AUNT,—I came into the world on the 7th inst., and consequently am about five days old, now. I have had wretched health ever since I made my appearance. First one thing and then another has kept me under the weather, and as a general thing I have been chilly and uncomfortable.

I am not corpulent, nor am I robust in any way. At birth I only weighed 4½ pounds with my clothes on—and the clothes were the chief feature of the weight, too, I am obliged to confess. But I am doing finely, all things considered. I was at a standstill for 3 days and a half, but during the last 24 hours I have gained nearly an ounce, avoirdupois.

They all say I look very old and venerable—and I am aware, myself, that I never smile. Life seems a serious

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thing, what I have seen of it—and my observation teaches me that it is made up mainly of hiccups, unnecessary washings, and colic. But no doubt you, who are old, have long since grown accustomed and reconciled to what seems to me such a disagreeable novelty.

My father said, this morning, when my face was in repose and thoughtful, that I looked precisely as young Edward Twichell of Hartford used to look some 12 months ago—chin, mouth, forehead, expression—everything.

My little mother is very bright and cheery, and I guess she is pretty happy, but I don't know what about. She laughs a great deal, notwithstanding she is sick abed. And she eats a great deal, though she says that is because the nurse desires it. And when she has had all the nurse desires her to have, she asks for more. She is getting along very well indeed.

My aunt Susie Crane has been here some ten days or two weeks, but goes home today, and Granny Fairbanks of Cleveland arrives to take her place.[1]

Very lovingly,

LANGDON CLEMENS.

P. S. Father said I had better write because you would be more interested in me, just now, than in the rest of the family.

Clemens had made the acquaintance of the Rev. Joseph Hopkins Twichell and his wife during his several sojourns in Hartford, in connection with his book publication, and the two men had immediately become firm friends. Twichell had come to Elmira in February to the wedding to assist Rev. Thos. K. Beecher in the marriage ceremony. Joseph Twichell was a devout Christian, while Mark Twain was a doubter, even a scoffer, where orthodoxy was concerned, yet the sincerity and humanity of the two men drew them together; their friendship was lifelong.

A second letter to Twichell, something more than a month later, shows a somewhat improved condition in the Clemens household.

[1] Mrs. Fairbanks, of the *Quaker City* excursion.

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JOSEPH HOPKINS TWICHELL ABOUT 1906

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old boy, when they use to tell me I would shorten my life ten years by smoking, they little knew the devotée they were wasting their puerile word upon—they little knew how trivial and valueless I would regard a decade that had no smoking in it! But I won't persuade you, Twichell—I won't until I see you again—but *then* we'll smoke for a week together, and then shut off again.

I would have gone to Hartford from New York last Saturday, but I got so homesick I couldn't. But maybe I'll come soon.

No, Sir, *catch* me in the metropolis again, to get homesick.

I didn't know Warner had a book out.

We send oceans and continents of love—I have worked myself down, today.

Yrs always

MARK.

With his establishment in Buffalo, Clemens, as already noted, had persuaded his sister, now a widow, and his mother, to settle in Fredonia, not far away. Later, he had found a position for Orion, as editor of a small paper which Bliss had established. What with these several diversions and the sorrows and sicknesses of his own household, we can readily imagine that literary work had been performed under difficulties. Certainly, humorous writing under such disturbing conditions could not have been easy, nor could we expect him to accept an invitation to be present and make a comic speech at an agricultural dinner, even though Horace Greeley would preside. However, he sent to the secretary of the association a letter which might be read at the gathering:

To A. B. Crandall, in Woodberry Falls, N. Y., to be read at an agricultural dinner:

BUFFALO, *Dec. 26, 1870.*

GENTLEMEN,—I thank you very much for your invitation to the Agricultural dinner, and would promptly accept it and as promptly be there but for the fact that

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Mr. Greeley is very busy this month and has requested me to clandestinely continue for him in The Tribune the articles "What I Know about Farming." Consequently the necessity of explaining to the readers of that Journal why buttermilk cannot be manufactured profitably at 8 cents a quart out of butter that costs 60 cents a pound compels my stay at home until the article is written.

With reiterated thanks, I am—

Yours truly,

MARK TWAIN.

In this letter Mark Twain made the usual mistake as to the title of the Greeley farming series, "What I Know of Farming" being the correct form.

The Buffalo *Express*, under Mark Twain's management, had become a sort of repository for humorous efforts, often of an indifferent order. Some of these things, signed by *nom de plumes*, were charged to Mark Twain. When Bret Harte's "Heathen Chinee" devastated the country, and was so widely parodied, an imitation of it entitled, "Three Aces," and signed "Carl Byng," was printed in the *Express*. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, then editor of *Every Saturday*, had not met Mark Twain, and, noticing the verses printed in the exchanges over his signature, was one of those who accepted them as Mark Twain's work. He wrote rather an uncomplimentary note in *Every Saturday* concerning the poem and its authorship, characterizing it as a feeble imitation of Bret Harte's "Heathen Chinee." Clemens promptly protested to Aldrich, then as promptly regretted having done so, feeling that he was making too much of a small matter. Hurriedly he sent a second brief note.

To Thomas Bailey Aldrich, editor of "Every Saturday," Boston, Massachusetts:

BUFFALO, *Jan. 22, 1871.*

DEAR SIR,—Please do not publish the note I sent you the other day about "Hy. Slocum's" plagiarism entitled "Three Aces"—it is not important enough for such a long paragraph. Webb writes me that he has put in a

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paragraph about it, too—and I have requested him to suppress it. If you would simply state, in *a line and a half* under "Literary Notes," that you mistook one "Hy. Slocum" (no, it was one "*Carl Byng*," I perceive) "Carl Byng" for Mark Twain, and that it was the former who wrote the plagiarism entitled "Three Aces," I think that would do a fair justice without any unseemly display. But it *is* hard to be accused of plagiarism—a crime I never have committed in my life.

Yrs. Truly

MARK TWAIN.

But this came too late. Aldrich replied that he could not be prevented from doing him justice, as forty-two thousand copies of the first note, with the editor's apology duly appended, were already in press. He would withdraw his apology in the next number of *Every Saturday*, if Mark Twain said so. Mark Twain's response this time assumed the proportions of a letter.

To Thomas Bailey Aldrich, in Boston:

472 DELAWARE ST., BUFFALO, *Jan. 28.*

DEAR MR. ALDRICH,—No indeed, don't take back the apology! Hang it, I don't want to abuse a man's civility merely because he gives me the chance.

I hear a good deal about doing things on the "spur of the moment"—*I* invariably regret the things I do on the spur of the moment. That disclaimer of mine was a case in point. I am ashamed every time I think of my bursting out before an unconcerned public with that bombastic pow-wow about burning publishers' letters, and all that sort of imbecility, and about my not being an imitator, etc. Who would find out that I am a natural fool if I kept always cool and never let nature come to the surface? Nobody.

But I did hate to be accused of plagiarizing Bret Harte, who trimmed and trained and schooled me patiently until he changed me from an awkward utterer of coarse

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grotesquenesses to a writer of paragraphs and chapters that have found a certain favor in the eyes of even some of the very decentest people in the land—and this grateful remembrance of mine ought to be worth its face, seeing that Bret broke our long friendship a year ago without any cause or provocation that I am aware of.

Well, it *is* funny, the reminiscences that glare out from murky corners of one's memory, now and then, without warning. Just at this moment a picture flits before me: *Scene*—private room in Barnum's Restaurant, Virginia, Nevada; present, Artemus Ward, Joseph T. Goodman, (editor and proprietor Daily "Enterprise"), and "Dan de Quille" and myself, reporters for same; remnants of the feast thin and scattering, but *such* tautology and repetition of empty bottles everywhere visible as to be offensive to the sensitive eye; time, 2.30 A.M.; Artemus thickly reciting a poem about a certain infant you wot of, and interrupting himself and *being* interrupted every few lines by poundings of the table and shouts of "Splendid, by Shorzhe!" Finally, a long, vociferous, poundiferous and vitreous jingling of applause announces the conclusion, and then Artemus: "Let every man 'at loves his fellow man and 'preciates a poet 'at loves *his* fellow man, stan' up!—stan' up and drink health and long life to Thomas Bailey Aldrich!—and drink it *stanning!*" (On all hands fervent, enthusiastic, and sincerely honest attempts to comply.) Then Artemus: "Well—consider it stanning, and drink it just as ye are!" Which was done.

You must excuse all this stuff from a stranger, for the present, and when I see you I will apologize in full.

Do you know the prettiest fancy and the neatest that ever shot through Harte's brain? It was this: When they were trying to decide upon a vignette for the cover of the *Overland*, a grizzly bear (of the arms of the State of California) was chosen. Nahl Bras. carved him and the page was printed, with him in it, looking thus: [Rude sketch of a grizzly bear.]

As a bear, he was a success—he was a good bear.—

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But then, it was objected, that he was an *objectless* bear —a bear that *meant* nothing in particular, signified nothing,—simply stood there snarling over his shoulder at nothing—and was painfully and manifestly a boorish and ill-natured intruder upon the fair page. All hands said that—none were satisfied. They hated badly to give him up, and yet they hated as much to have him there when there was no *point* to him. But presently Harte took a pencil and drew these two simple lines under his feet and behold he was a magnificent success!—the ancient symbol of California savagery snarling at the approaching type of high and progressive Civilization, the first Overland locomotive!: [Sketch of a small section of railway track.]

I just think that was nothing less than inspiration itself.

Once more I apologize, and this time I do it "stanning!"

Yrs. Truly

SAML. L. CLEMENS.

The "two simple lines," of course, were the train rails under the bear's feet, and completed the striking cover design of the *Overland* monthly.

The brief controversy over the "Three Aces" was the beginning of a long and happy friendship between Aldrich and Mark Twain. Howells, Aldrich, Twichell, and Charles Dudley Warner — these were Mark Twain's intimates, men that he loved, each for his own special charm and worth. Aldrich he considered the most brilliant of living men.

In his reply to Clemens's letter, Aldrich declared that he was glad now that, for the sake of such a letter, he had accused him falsely, and added:

"Mem. Always abuse people.

"When you come to Boston, if you do not make your presence manifest to me, I'll put in a ¶ in *Every Saturday* to the effect that though you are generally known as Mark Twain your favorite *nom de plume* is 'Barry Gray.'"

Clemens did not fail to let Aldrich know when he was in Boston

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again, and the little coterie of younger writers forgathered to give him welcome.

Buffalo agreed with neither Mrs. Clemens nor the baby. What with nursing and anguish of mind, Mark Twain found that he could do nothing on the new book, and that he must give up his magazine department. He had lost interest in his paper and his surroundings in general. Journalism and authorship are poor yoke-mates. To Orion Clemens, at this time editing Bliss's paper at Hartford, he explained the situation.

To Orion Clemens, in Hartford:

BUFFALO, *4th 1871.*

MY DEAR BRO,—What I wanted of the "Liar" Sketch, was to work it into the California book—which I shall do. But day before yesterday I concluded to go out of the Galaxy on the strength of it, so I have turned it into the last Memoranda I shall ever write, and published it as a "specimen chapter" of my forthcoming book.—

I have written the Galaxy people that I will never furnish them another article long or short, for any price but $500.00 cash—and have requested them not to ask me for contributions any more, even at that price.

I hope that lets them out, for I will stick to that. Now do try and leave me clear out of the Publisher for the present, for I am endangering my reputation by writing *too much*—I want to get out of the public view for awhile.

I am still nursing Livy night and day and cannot write anything. I am nearly worn out. We shall go to Elmira ten days hence (if Livy can travel on a mattress then,) and stay there till I have finished the California book—say three months. But I can't begin work right away when I get there—must have a week's rest, for I have been through 30 days' terrific siege.

That makes it after the middle of March before I can go fairly to work—and then I'll have to hump myself and not lose a moment. You and Bliss just put yourselves

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in my place and you will see that my hands are full and more than full.

When I told Bliss in N. Y. that I would write something for the Publisher I could not know that I was just about to lose *fifty days*. Do you see the difference it makes? Just as soon as ever I can, I will send some of the book M.S. but right in the first chapter I have got to alter the whole style of one of my characters and re-write him clear through to where I am now. It is no fool of a job, I can tell you, but the book will be greatly bettered by it. Hold on a few days—four or five—and I will see if I can get a few chapters fixed to send to Bliss.

I have offered this dwelling house and the Express for sale, and when we go to Elmira we leave here for good. I shall not select a new home till the book is finished, but we have little doubt that Hartford will be the place.

We are almost certain of that. Ask Bliss how it would be to ship our furniture to Hartford, rent an upper room in a building and unbox it and store it there where somebody can frequently look after it. Is not the idea good? The furniture is worth $10,000 or $12,000 and must not be jammed into any kind of a place and left unattended to for a year.

The first man that offers $25,000 for our house can take it—it cost that. What are taxes there? Here, all bunched together—of all kinds, they are 7 per cent—simply ruin.

The things you have written in the Publisher are tip-top. In haste, Yr Bro—

SAM.

There are no further letters until the end of April, by which time the situation had improved. Clemens had sold his interest in the *Express* (though at a loss), had severed his magazine connection, and was located at Quarry Farm, on a beautiful hilltop above Elmira, the home of Mrs. Clemens's sister, Mrs. Theodore Crane. The pure air and rest of that happy place, where they were to spend so many idyllic summers, had proved beneficial to the sick ones, and work on the new book progressed

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in consequence. Then Mark Twain's old editor, "Joe" Goodman, came from Virginia City for a visit, and his advice and encouragement were of the greatest value. Clemens even offered to engage Goodman on a salary, to remain until he had finished his book. Goodman declined the salary, but extended his visit, and Mark Twain at last seems to have found himself working under ideal conditions. He jubilantly reports his progress.

To Elisha Bliss, in Hartford:

ELMIRA, *Monday, May 15th 1871.*

FRIEND BLISS,—Yrs rec'd enclosing check for $703.35. The old "Innocents" holds out handsomely.

I have MS. enough on hand now, to make (allowing for engravings) about 400 pages of the book—consequently am two-thirds done. I intended to run up to Hartford about the middle of the week and take it along; because it has chapters in it that ought by all means to be in the prospectus; but I find myself so thoroughly interested in my work, now (a thing I have not experienced for months) that I can't bear to lose a single moment of the inspiration. So I will stay here and peg away as long as it lasts. My present idea is to write as much more as I have already written, and then cull from the mass the very best chapters and discard the rest. I am not half as well satisfied with the first part of the book as I am with what I am writing now. When I get it done I want to see the man who will begin to read it and not finish it. If it falls short of the "Innocents" in any respect I shall lose my guess.

When I was writing the "Innocents" my daily stunt was 30 pages of MS and I hardly ever got beyond it; but I have gone over that nearly every day for the last ten. That shows that I am writing with a red-hot interest. Nothing grieves me now—nothing troubles me, nothing bothers me or gets my attention— I don't think of anything but the book, and I don't have an hour's unhappiness about anything and don't care two cents whether school keeps or not. It will be a bully book.

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If I keep up my present lick three weeks more I shall be able and willing to scratch out half of the chapters of the Overland narrative—and shall do it.

You do not mention having received my second batch of MS, sent a week or two ago—about 100 pages.

If you want to issue a prospectus and go right to canvassing, say the word and I will forward some more MS—or send it by hand—special messenger. Whatever chapters you think are unquestionably good, we will retain of course, so they can go into a prospectus as well one time as another. The book will be done soon, now. I have 1200 pages of MS already written and am now writing 200 a week—more than that, in fact; during the past week wrote 23 one day, then 30, 33, 35, 52, and 65.—How's that?

It will be a starchy book, and should be full of snappy pictures—especially pictures worked in with the letter-press. The dedication will be worth the price of the volume—thus:

To the Late Cain.
This Book is Dedicated:

Not on account of respect for his memory, for it merits little respect; not on account of sympathy with him, for his bloody deed placed him without the pale of sympathy, strictly speaking: but out of a mere human commiseration for him that it was his misfortune to live in a dark age that knew not the beneficent Insanity Plea.

I think it will do.

Yrs. CLEMENS.

P. S.—The reaction is beginning and my stock is looking up. I am getting the bulliest offers for books and almanacs; am flooded with lecture invitations, and one periodical offers me $6,000 cash for 12 articles, of any length and on any subject, treated humorously or otherwise.

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The suggested dedication "to the late Cain" may have been the humoristic impulse of the moment. At all events, it did not materialize.

Clemens's enthusiasm for work was now such that he agreed with Redpath to return to the platform that autumn, and he began at once writing lectures. His disposal of the Buffalo paper had left him considerably in debt, and platforming was a sure and quick method of retrenchment. More than once in the years ahead Mark Twain would return to travel and one-night stands to lift a burden of debt. Brief letters to Redpath of this time have an interest and even a humor of their own.

Letters to James Redpath, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *June 27, 1871.*

DEAR RED,—Wrote another lecture—a third one—to-day. *It* is the one I am going to deliver. I think I shall call it "Reminiscences of Some Pleasant Characters Whom I Have Met," (or should the "whom" be left out?) It covers my whole acquaintance—kings, lunatics, idiots and all. Suppose you give the item a start in the Boston papers. If I write fifty lectures I shall only choose one and talk that one only.

No sir: Don't you put that scarecrow (portrait) from the Galaxy in, I won't stand that nightmare.

Yours,

MARK.

ELMIRA, *July 10, 1871.*

DEAR REDPATH,—I never made a success of a lecture delivered in a church yet. People are afraid to laugh in a church. They can't be made to do it in any possible way.

Success to Fall's carbuncle and many happy returns.

Yours,

MARK.

To Mr. Fall, in Boston:

ELMIRA, N. Y. *July 20, 1871.*

FRIEND FALL,—Redpath tells me to blow up. Here goes! I wanted you to scare Rondout off with a big

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price. $125 ain't big. I got $100 the first time I ever talked there and now they have a much larger hall. It is a hard town to get to—I run a chance of getting caught by the ice and missing next engagement. Make the price $150 and let them draw out.

Yours

MARK.

Letters to James Redpath, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Tuesday Aug. 8, 1871.*

DEAR RED,—I am different from other women; my mind changes oftener. People who have no mind can easily be steadfast and firm, but when a man is loaded down to the guards with it, as I am, every heavy sea of foreboding or inclination, maybe of indolence, shifts the cargo. See? Therefore, if you will notice, one week I am likely to give rigid instructions to confine me to New England; next week, send me to Arizona; the next week withdraw my name; the next week give you full untrammelled swing; and the week following modify it. You must try to keep the run of my mind, Redpath, it is your business being the agent, and it always was too many for me. It appears to me to be one of the finest pieces of mechanism I have ever met with. Now about the West, this week, I am willing that you shall retain all the Western engagements. But what I shall want *next* week is still with God.

Let us not profane the mysteries with soiled hands and prying eyes of sin.

Yours,

MARK.

P. S. Shall be here 2 weeks, will run up there when Nasby comes.

ELMIRA, N. Y. *Sept. 15, 1871.*

DEAR REDPATH,—I wish you would get me released from the lecture at Buffalo. I mortally hate that society

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there, and I don't doubt they hired me. I once gave them a packed house free of charge, and they never even had the common politeness to thank me. They left me to shift for myself, too, a la Bret Harte at Harvard. Get me rid of Buffalo! Otherwise I'll have no recourse left but to get sick the day I lecture there. I can get sick easy enough, by the simple process of saying the word—well never mind what word—I am not going to lecture there.

Yours,

MARK.

BUFFALO, *Sept. 26, 1871.*

DEAR REDPATH,—We have thought it all over and decided that we can't possibly talk after Feb. 2.

We shall take up our residence in Hartford 6 days from now

Yours

MARK.

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XI

LETTERS 1871–72. REMOVAL TO HARTFORD. A LECTURE TOUR. "ROUGHING IT." FIRST LETTER TO HOWELLS

THE house they had taken in Hartford was the Hooker property on Forest Street, a handsome place in a distinctly literary neighborhood. Harriet Beecher Stowe, Charles Dudley Warner, and other well-known writers were within easy walking distance; Twichell was perhaps half a mile away.

It was the proper environment for Mark Twain. He settled his little family there, and was presently at Redpath's office in Boston, which was a congenial place, as we have seen before. He did not fail to return to the company of Nasby, Josh Billings, and those others of Redpath's "attractions" as long and as often as distance would permit. Bret Harte, who by this time had won fame, was also in Boston now, and frequently, with Howells, Aldrich, and Mark Twain, gathered in some quiet restaurant corner for a luncheon that lasted through a dim winter afternoon—a period of anecdote, reminiscence, and mirth. They were all young then, and laughed easily. Howells has written of one such luncheon given by Ralph Keeler, a young Californian—a gathering at which James T. Fields was present —"Nothing remains to me of the happy time but a sense of idle and aimless and joyful talk-play, beginning and ending nowhere, of eager laughter, of countless good stories from Fields, of a heat-lightning shimmer of wit from Aldrich, of an occasional concentration of our joint mockeries upon our host, who took it gladly."

But a lecture circuit cannot be restricted to the radius of Boston. Clemens was presently writing to Redpath from Washington and points farther west.

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To James Redpath, in Boston:

WASHINGTON, *Tuesday, Oct. 28, 1871.*

DEAR RED,—I have come square out, thrown "Reminiscences" overboard, and taken "Artemus Ward, Humorist," for my subject. Wrote it here on Friday and Saturday, and read it from MS last night to an enormous house. It suits *me* and I'll never deliver the nasty, nauseous "Reminiscences" any more.

Yours,

MARK.

The Artemus Ward lecture lasted eleven days, then he wrote:

To Redpath and Fall, in Boston:

BUFFALO DEPOT, *Dec. 8, 1871.*

REDPATH & FALL, BOSTON,—Notify all hands that from this time I shall talk nothing but selections from my forthcoming book "Roughing It." Tried it last night. Suits me tip-top.

SAM'L L. CLEMENS.

The *Roughing It* chapters proved a success, and continued in high favor through the rest of the season.

To James Redpath, in Boston:

LOGANSPORT, IND. *Jan. 2, 1872.*

FRIEND REDPATH,—Had a splendid time with a splendid audience in Indianapolis last night—a perfectly jammed house, just as I have had all the time out here. I like the new lecture but I hate the "Artemus Ward" talk and won't talk it any more. No man ever approved that choice of subject in my hearing, I think.

Give me some comfort. If I am to talk in New York am I going to have a good house? I don't care now to have any appointments cancelled. I'll even "fetch" those Dutch Pennsylvanians with this lecture.

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Have paid up $4000 indebtedness. You are the last on my list. Shall begin to pay you in a few days and then I shall be a free man again.

Yours, MARK.

With his debts paid, Clemens was anxious to be getting home. Two weeks following the above he wrote Redpath that he would accept no more engagements at any price, outside of New England, and added, "The fewer engagements I have from this time forth the better I shall be pleased." By the end of February he was back in Hartford, refusing an engagement in Boston, and announcing to Redpath, "If I had another engagement I'd rot before I'd fill it." From which we gather that he was not entirely happy in the lecture field.

As a matter of fact, Mark Twain loathed the continuous travel and nightly drudgery of platform life. He was fond of entertaining, and there were moments of triumph that repaid him for a good deal, but the tyranny of a schedule and time-tables was a constant exasperation.

Meantime, *Roughing It* had appeared and was selling abundantly. Mark Twain, free of debt, and in pleasant circumstances, felt that the outlook was bright. It became even more so when, in March, the second child, a little girl, Susy, was born, with no attending misfortunes. But, then, in the early summer little Langdon died. It was seldom, during all of Mark Twain's life, that he enjoyed more than a brief period of unmixed happiness.

It was in June of that year that Clemens wrote his first letter to William Dean Howells—the first of several hundred that would follow in the years to come, and has in it something that is characteristic of nearly all the Clemens-Howells letters—a kind of tender playfulness that answered to something in Howells's make-up, his sense of humor, his wide knowledge of a humanity which he pictured so amusingly to the world.

To William Dean Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *June 15, 1872.*

FRIEND HOWELLS,—Could you tell me how I could get a copy of your portrait as published in Hearth and Home?

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WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS IN 1874

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I hear so much talk about it as being among the finest works of art which have yet appeared in that journal, that I feel a strong desire to see it. Is it suitable for framing? I have written the publishers of H & H time and again, but they say that the demand for the portrait immediately exhausted the edition and now a copy cannot be had, even for the European demand, which has now begun. Bret Harte has been here, and says his family would not be without that portrait for any consideration. He says his children get up in the night and yell for it. I would give anything for a copy of that portrait to put up in my parlor. I have Oliver Wendell Holmes's and Bret Harte's, as published in Every Saturday, and of all the swarms that come every day to gaze upon them none go away that are not softened and humbled and made more resigned to the will of God. If I had yours to put up alongside of them, I believe the combination would bring more souls to earnest reflection and ultimate conviction of their lost condition, than any other kind of warning would. Where in the nation can I get that portrait? Here are heaps of people that want it,—that *need* it. There is my uncle. *He* wants a copy. He is lying at the point of death. He has *been* lying at the point of death for two years. He wants a copy—and I want him to *have* a copy. And I want you to send a copy to the man that shot my dog. I want to see if he is dead to every human instinct.

Now you send me that portrait. I am sending you mine, in this letter; and am glad to do it, for it has been greatly admired. People who are judges of art, find in the execution a grandeur which has not been equalled in this country, and an expression which has not been approached in *any*.

Yrs truly,

S. L. CLEMENS.

P. S. 62,000 copies of "Roughing It" sold and delivered in 4 months.

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The Clemens family did not spend the summer at Quarry Farm that year. The sea air was prescribed for Mrs. Clemens and the baby, and they went to Saybrook, Connecticut, to Fenwick Hall. Clemens wrote very little, though he seems to have planned *Tom Sawyer*, and perhaps made its earliest beginning, which was in dramatic form.

His mind, however, was otherwise active. He was always more or less given to inventions, and in his next letter we find a description of one which he brought to comparative perfection.

He had also conceived the idea of another book of travel, and this was his purpose of a projected trip to England.

To Orion Clemens, in Hartford:

FENWICK HALL, SAYBROOK, CONN.
Aug. 11, 1872.

MY DEAR BRO.—I shall sail for England in the Scotia, Aug. 21.

But what I wish to put on record now, is my new invention—hence this note, which you will preserve. It is this—a *self-pasting scrap-book*—good enough idea if some juggling tailor does not come along and ante-date me a couple of months, as in the case of the elastic vest-strap.

The nuisance of keeping a scrap-book is: 1. One never has paste or gum tragacanth handy; 2. Mucilage won't stick, or stay, 4 weeks; 3. Mucilage sucks out the ink and makes the scraps unreadable; 4. To daub and paste 3 or 4 pages of scraps is tedious, slow, nasty and tiresome. My idea is this: Make a scrap-book *with leaves veneered or coated with gum-stickum* of some kind; wet the page with sponge, brush, rag or tongue, and dab on your scraps like postage stamps.

Lay on the gum in columns of stripes.

Each stripe of gum the length of say 20 ems, small pica, and as broad as your finger; a blank about as broad as your finger between each 2 stripes—so in wetting the paper you need not wet any more of the gum than your

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scrap or scraps will cover—then you may shut up the book and the leaves won't stick together.

Preserve, also, the envelope of this letter—postmark ought to be good evidence of the date of this great humanizing and civilizing invention.

I'll put it into Dan Slote's hands and tell him he must send you all over America to urge its use upon stationers and booksellers—so don't buy into a newspaper. The name of this thing is "Mark Twain's Self-Pasting Scrapbook."

All well here. Shall be up 2 P. M. Tuesday. Send the carriage.

Yr Bro.

S. L. CLEMENS.

The Dan Slote of this letter is, of course, his old *Quaker City* shipmate, who was engaged in the blank-book business, the firm being Slote & Woodman, located at 119 and 121 William Street, New York.

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XII

LETTERS 1872–73. MARK TWAIN IN ENGLAND. LONDON HONORS. ACQUAINTANCE WITH DR. JOHN BROWN. A LECTURE TRIUMPH. "THE GILDED AGE"

CLEMENS did, in fact, sail for England on the given date, and was lavishly received there. All literary London joined in giving him a good time. He had not as yet been received seriously by the older American men of letters, but England made no question as to his title to first rank. Already, too, they classified him as of the human type of Lincoln, and reveled in him without stint. Howells writes: "In England, rank, fashion, and culture rejoiced in him. Lord Mayors, Lord Chief Justices, and magnates of many kinds were his hosts."

He was treated so well and enjoyed it all so much that he could not write a book—the kind of book he had planned. One could not poke fun at a country or a people that had welcomed him with open arms. He made plenty of notes, at first, but presently gave up the book idea and devoted himself altogether to having a good time.

He had one grievance—a publisher by the name of Hotten, a sort of literary harpy, of which there were a great number in those days of defective copyright, not merely content with pilfering his early work, had reprinted, under the name of Mark Twain, the work of a mixed assortment of other humorists, an offensive volume bearing the title, *Screamers and Eye-openers, by Mark Twain.*

They besieged him to lecture in London, and promised him overflowing houses. Artemus Ward, during his last days, had carried London by storm with his platform humor, and they promised Mark Twain even greater success. For some reason, however, he did not welcome the idea; perhaps there was too much gaiety. To Mrs. Clemens he wrote:

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To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

LONDON, *Sep. 15, 1872.*

Livy, darling, everybody says lecture—lecture—lecture —but I have not the least idea of doing it—certainly not at present. Mr. Dolby, who took Dickens to America, is coming to talk business to me tomorrow, though I have sent him word once before, that I can't be hired to talk here, because I have no time to spare.

There is too much sociability—I do not get along fast enough with work. Tomorrow I lunch with Mr. Toole and a Member of Parliament—Toole is the most able Comedian of the day. And then I am done for a while. On Tuesday I mean to hang a card to my keybox, inscribed—"Gone out of the City for a week"—and then I shall go to work and work hard. One can't be caught in a hive of 4,000,000 people, like this.

I have got such a perfectly delightful razor. I have a notion to buy some for Charley, Theodore and Slee—for I *know* they have no such razors there. I have got a neat little watch-chain for Annie—$20.

I love you my darling. My love to all of you.

SAML.

That Mark Twain should feel and privately report something of his triumphs we need not wonder at. Certainly he was never one to give himself airs, but to have the world's great literary center paying court to him, who only ten years before had been penniless and unknown, and who once had been a barefoot Tom Sawyer in Hannibal, was quite startling. It is gratifying to find evidence of human weakness in the following heart-to-heart letter to his publisher, especially in view of the relating circumstances.

To Elisha Bliss, in Hartford:

LONDON, *Sept. 28, 1872.*

FRIEND BLISS,—I have been received in a sort of tremendous way, tonight, by the brains of London, assembled

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at the annual dinner of the Sheriffs of London—mine being (between you and me) a name which was received with a flattering outburst of spontaneous applause when the long list of guests was called.

I might have perished on the spot but for the friendly support and assistance of my excellent friend Sir John Bennett—and I want you to paste the enclosed in a couple of the handsomest copies of the "Innocents" and "Roughing It," and send them to him. His address is—

"Sir John Bennett,
Cheapside,
London."

Yrs Truly
S. L. CLEMENS.

The "relating circumstances" were these: At the above-mentioned dinner there had been a roll-call of the distinguished guests present, and each name had been duly applauded. Clemens, conversing in a whisper with his neighbor, Sir John Bennett, did not give very close attention to the names, applauding mechanically with the others.

Finally, a name was read that brought out a vehement hand-clapping. Mark Twain, not to be outdone in cordiality, joined vigorously, and kept his hands going even after the others finished. Then, remarking the general laughter, he whispered to Sir John: "Whose name was that we were just applauding?"

"Mark Twain's."

We may believe that the "friendly support" of Sir John Bennett was welcome for the moment. But the incident could do him no harm; the diners regarded it as one of his jokes, and enjoyed him all the more for it.

He was ready to go home by November, but by no means had he had enough of England. He really had some thought of returning there permanently. In a letter to Mrs. Crane, at Quarry Farm, he wrote:

"If you and Theodore will come over in the Spring with Livy and me, and spend the summer you will see a country that is

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so beautiful that you will be obliged to believe in Fairyland . . . and Theodore can browse with me among dusty old dens that look now as they looked five hundred years ago; and puzzle over books in the British Museum that were made before Christ was born; and in the customs of their public dinners, and the ceremonies of every official act, and the dresses of a thousand dignitaries, trace the speech and manners of all the centuries that have dragged their lagging decades over England since the Heptarchy fell asunder. I would a good deal rather live here if I could get the rest of you over."

In a letter home, to his mother and sister, we get a further picture of his enjoyment.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett:

LONDON, *Nov. 6, 1872.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I have been so everlasting busy that I *couldn't* write—and moreover I have been so unceasingly lazy that I couldn't have written anyhow. I came here to take notes for a book, but I haven't done much but attend dinners and make speeches. But have had a jolly good time and I do hate to go away from these English folks; they make a stranger feel entirely at home—and they laugh so easily that it is a comfort to make after-dinner speeches here. I have made hundreds of friends; and last night in the crush of the opening of the New Guild-hall Library and Museum, I was surprised to meet a familiar face every few steps. Nearly 4,000 people, of both sexes, came and went during the evening, so I had a good opportunity to make a great many new acquaintances.

Livy is willing to come here with me next April and stay several months—so I am going home next Tuesday. I would sail on Saturday, but that is the day of the Lord Mayor's annual grand state dinner, when they say 900 of the great men of the city sit down to table, a great many of them in their fine official and court paraphernalia, so I must not miss it. However, I may yet change my mind

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and sail Saturday. I am looking at a fine Magic lantern which will cost a deal of money, and if I buy it Sammy may come and learn to make the gas and work the machinery, and paint pictures for it on glass. I mean to give exhibitions for charitable purposes in Hartford, and charge a dollar a head.

In a hurry, Ys affly

SAM.

He sailed November 12th on the *Batavia*, arriving in New York two weeks later. There had been a presidential election in his absence. General Grant had defeated Horace Greeley, a result, in some measure at least, attributed to the amusing and powerful pictures of the cartoonist, Thomas Nast. Mark Twain admired Greeley's talents, but he regarded him as poorly qualified for the nation's chief executive. He wrote:

To Th. Nast, in Morristown, N. J.:

HARTFORD, *Nov. 1872.*

Nast, you more than any other man have won a prodigious victory for Grant—I mean, rather, for civilization and progress. Those pictures were simply marvelous, and if any man in the land has a right to hold his head up and be honestly proud of his share in this year's vast events that man is unquestionably yourself. We all do sincerely honor you, and are proud of you.

MARK TWAIN.

Perhaps Mark Twain was too busy at this time to write letters. His success in England had made him more than ever popular in America, and he could by no means keep up with the demands on him. In January he contributed to the New York *Tribune* some letters on the Sandwich Islands, but as these were more properly articles they do not seem to belong here.

He refused to go on the lecture circuit, though he permitted Redpath to book him for any occasional appearance, and it is due to one of these special engagements that we have the only

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letter preserved from this time. It is to Howells, and written with that exaggeration with which he was likely to embellish his difficulties. We are not called upon to believe that there were really any such demonstrations as those ascribed to Warner and himself.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

FARMINGTON AVE, *Hartford Feb. 27.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I am in a sweat and Warner is in another. I told Redpath some time ago I would lecture in Boston any two days he might choose provided they were *consecutive days*—

I never dreamed of his choosing days during *Lent* since that was his special horror—but all at once he telegraphs me, and hollers at me in all manner of ways that I am booked for Boston *March 5* of all days in the year—and to make matters just as mixed and uncertain as possible, I can't find out to save my life whether he means to lecture me on the 6th or not.

Warner's been in here swearing like a lunatic, and saying he had written you to come on the 4th,—and I said, "You leather-head, if I talk in Boston both afternoon and evening March 5, I'll have to go to Boston the 4th," —and then he just kicked up his heels and went off cursing after a fashion I never heard of before.

Now let's just leave this thing to Providence for 24 hours—you bet it will come out all right.

Yours ever

MARK.

He was writing a book with Warner at this time—*The Gilded Age*—the two authors having been challenged by their wives one night at dinner to write a better book than the current novels they had been discussing with some severity. Clemens already had a story in his mind, and Warner agreed to collaborate in the writing. It was begun without delay. Clemens wrote the first three hundred and ninety-nine pages, and read them aloud

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to Warner, who took up the story at this point and continued it through twelve chapters, after which they worked alternately, and with great enjoyment. They also worked rapidly, and in April the story was completed. For a collaboration by two men so different in temperament and literary method it was a remarkable performance.

Another thing Mark Twain did that winter was to buy some land on Farmington Avenue and begin the building of a home. He had by no means given up returning to England, and made his plans to sail with Mrs. Clemens and Susy in May. Miss Clara Spaulding, of Elmira[1]—a girlhood friend of Mrs. Clemens—was to accompany them.

The Daily Graphic heard of the proposed journey, and wrote, asking for a farewell word. His characteristic reply is the only letter of any kind that has survived from that spring.

To the Editor of "The Daily Graphic," in New York City:

HARTFORD, *Apl. 17, 1873.*

ED. GRAPHIC,—Your note is received. If the following two lines which I have cut from it are your natural handwriting, then I understand you to ask me "for a farewell letter in the name of the American people." Bless you, the joy of the American people is just a little premature; I haven't gone yet. And what is more, I am not going to *stay*, when I *do* go.

Yes, it is true. I am only going to remain beyond the sea, six months, that is all. I love stir and excitement; and so the moment the spring birds begin to sing, and the lagging weariness of summer to threaten, I grow restless, I get the fidgets; I want to pack off somewhere where there's something going on. But you know how that is—you must have felt that way. This very day I saw the signs in the air of the coming dullness, and I said to myself, "How glad I am that I have already chartered a steamship!" There was absolutely nothing in the morning

[1] Later Mrs. John B. Stanchfield, of New York.

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papers. You can see for yourself what the telegraphic headings were:

BY TELEGRAPH

A Father Killed by His Son

A Bloody Fight in Kentucky

An Eight-year-old murderer

A Town in a State of General Riot

A Court House Fired, and Negroes Therein Shot while Escaping

A Louisiana Massacre

Two to Three Hundred Men Roasted Alive!

A Lively Skirmish in Indiana

(and thirty other similar headings.)

The items under those headings all bear date yesterday, Apl. 16 (refer to your own paper)—and I give you my word of honor that that string of commonplace stuff was everything there was in the telegraphic columns that a body could call news. Well, said I to myself this is getting pretty dull; this is getting pretty dry; there don't appear to be anything going on anywhere; has this progressive nation gone to sleep? Have I got to stand another month of this torpidity before I can begin to browse among the lively capitals of Europe?

But never mind—things may revive while I am away.

During the last two months my next-door neighbor, Chas. Dudley Warner, has dropped his "Back-Log Studies," and he and I have written a bulky novel in partnership. He has worked up the fiction and I have hurled in the facts. I consider it one of the most astonishing novels that ever was written. Night after night I sit up reading it over and over again and crying. It will be published early in the Fall, with plenty of pictures. Do you consider this an advertisement?—and if so, do you charge for such things when a man is your friend?

Yours truly,

SAML. L. CLEMENS,
"MARK TWAIN."

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An amusing, even if annoying, incident happened about the time of Mark Twain's departure. A man named Chew related to Twichell a most entertaining occurrence. Twichell saw great possibilities in it, and suggested that Mark Twain be allowed to make a story of it, sharing the profits with Chew. Chew agreed, and promised to send the facts, carefully set down. Twichell, in the mean time, told the story to Clemens, who was delighted with it and strongly tempted to write it at once, while he was in the spirit, without waiting on Chew. Fortunately, he did not do so, for when Chew's material came it was in the form of a clipping, the story having been already printed in some newspaper. Chew's knowledge of literary ethics would seem to have been slight. He thought himself entitled to something under the agreement with Twichell. Mark Twain, by this time in London, naturally had a different opinion.

To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:

LONDON, *June 9, '73.*

DEAR OLD JOE,—I consider myself *wholly* at liberty to decline to pay Chew anything, and at the same time strongly tempted to sue him into the bargain for coming so near ruining me. If he hadn't happened to send me that thing in print, I would have used the story (like an innocent fool) and would straightway have been hounded to death as a plagiarist. It would have absolutely destroyed me. I cannot conceive of a man being such a hopeless ass (after serving as a legislative reporter, too) as to imagine that I or any other literary man in his senses would consent to chew over old stuff that had already been in print. If that man wern't an infant in swaddling clothes, his only reply to our petition would have been, "It has been in print." It makes me as mad as the very Old Harry every time I think of Mr. Chew and the frightfully narrow escape I have had at his hands. *Confound* Mr. Chew, with all my heart! I'm willing that he should have ten dollars for his trouble of warming over his cold victuals—*cheerfully* willing to that—but no more. If I had had him near when his letter came, I would have got out my toma-

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hawk and gone for him. He didn't tell the story half as well as you did, anyhow.

I wish to goodness you were here this moment—nobody in our parlor but Livy and me,—and a very good view of London to the fore. We have a luxuriously ample suite of apartments in the Langham Hotel, 3rd floor, our bedroom looking straight up Portland Place and our parlor having a noble array of great windows looking out upon both streets (Portland Place and the crook that joins it to Regent Street.)

9 P.M. Full twilight—rich sunset tints lingering in the west.

I am not going to write anything—rather tell it when I get back. I love you and Harmony, and that is all the fresh news I've got, anyway. And I mean to keep that fresh all the time.

Lovingly

MARK.

P. S.—Am luxuriating in glorious old Pepy's Diary, and smoking.

Letters are exceedingly scarce through all this period. Mark Twain, now on his second visit to London, was literally overwhelmed with honors and entertainment; his rooms at the Langham were like a court. Such men as Robert Browning, Turgenieff, Sir John Millais, and Charles Kingsley hastened to call. Kingsley and others gave him dinners. Mrs. Clemens to her sister wrote: "It is perfectly discouraging to try to write you."

The continuous excitement presently told on her. In July all further engagements were canceled, and Clemens took his little family to Scotland, for quiet and rest. They broke the journey at York, and it was there that Mark Twain wrote the only letter remaining from this time.

Part of a letter to Mrs. Jervis Langdon, of Elmira, N. Y.:

For the present we shall remain in this queer old walled town, with its crooked, narrow lanes, that tell us of their

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old day that knew no wheeled vehicles; its plaster-and-timber dwellings, with upper stories far overhanging the street, and thus marking *their* date, say three hundred years ago; the stately city walls, the castellated gates, the ivy-grown, foliage-sheltered, most noble and picturesque ruin of St. Mary's Abbey, suggesting *their* date, say five hundred years ago, in the heart of Crusading times and the glory of English chivalry and romance; the vast Cathedral of York, with its worn carvings and quaintly pictured windows, preaching of still remoter days; the outlandish names of streets and courts and byways that stand as a record and a memorial, all these centuries, of Danish dominion here in still earlier times; the hint here and there of King Arthur and his knights and their bloody fights with Saxon oppressors round about this old city more than thirteen hundred years gone by; and, last of all, the melancholy old stone coffins and sculptured inscriptions, a venerable arch and a hoary tower of stone that still remain and are kissed by the sun and caressed by the shadows every day, just as the sun and the shadows have kissed and caressed them every lagging day since the Roman Emperor's soldiers placed them here in the times when Jesus the Son of Mary walked the streets of Nazareth a youth, with no more name or fame than the Yorkshire boy who is loitering down this street this moment.

Their destination was Edinburgh, where they remained a month. Mrs. Clemens's health gave way on their arrival there, and her husband, knowing the name of no other physician in the place, looked up Dr. John Brown, author of *Rab and His Friends*, and found in him not only a skilful practitioner, but a lovable companion, to whom they all became deeply attached. Little Susy, now seventeen months old, became his special favorite. He named her Megalops, because of her great eyes.

Mrs. Clemens regained her strength and they returned to London. Clemens, still urged to lecture, finally agreed with George Dolby to a week's engagement, and added a promise that after taking his wife and daughter back to America he

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would return immediately for a more extended course. Dolby announced him to appear at the Queen's Concert Rooms, Hanover Square, for the week of October 13–18, his lecture to be the old Sandwich Islands talk that seven years before had brought him his first success. The great hall, the largest in London, was thronged at each appearance, and the papers declared that Mark Twain had no more than "whetted the public appetite" for his humor. Three days later, October 21, 1873, Clemens, with his little party, sailed for home. Half-way across the ocean he wrote the friend they had left in Scotland:

To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:

MID-ATLANTIC, *Oct. 30, 1873.*

OUR DEAR FRIEND THE DOCTOR,—We have plowed a long way over the sea, and there's twenty-two hundred miles of restless water between us, now, besides the railway stretch. And yet you are so present with us, so close to us that a span and a whisper would bridge the distance.

The first three days were stormy, and wife, child, maid, and Miss Spaulding were all sea-sick 25 hours out of the 24, and I was sorry I ever started. However, it has been smooth, and balmy, and sunny and altogether lovely for a day or two now, and at night there is a broad luminous highway stretching over the sea to the moon, over which the spirits of the sea are traveling up and down all through the secret night and having a genuine good time, I make no doubt.

Today they discovered a "collie" on board! I find (as per advertisement which I sent you) that they won't carry dogs in these ships at any price. This one has been concealed up to this time. Now his owner has to pay £10 or heave him overboard. Fortunately the doggie is a performing doggie and the money will be paid. So after all it was just as well you didn't intrust your collie to us.

A poor little child died at midnight and was buried at dawn this morning—sheeted and shotted, and sunk in the

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middle of the lonely ocean in water three thousand fathoms deep. Pity the poor mother.

With our love.

S. L. CLEMENS.

Mark Twain was back in London, lecturing again at the Queen's Concert Rooms, after barely a month's absence. Charles Warren Stoddard, whom he had known in California, shared his apartment at the Langham, and acted as his secretary—a very necessary office, for he was besieged by callers and bombarded with letters.

He remained in London two months, lecturing steadily at Hanover Square to full houses. It is unlikely that there is any other platform record to match it. One letter of this period has been preserved. It is written to Twichell, near the end of his engagement.

To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:

LONDON, *Jan. 5 1874.*

MY DEAR OLD JOE,—I knew you would be likely to graduate into an ass if I came away; and so you have—if you have stopped smoking. However, I have a strong faith that it is not too late, yet, and that the judiciously managed influence of a bad example will fetch you back again.

I wish you *had* written me some news—Livy tells me precious little. She mainly writes to hurry me home and to tell me how much she respects me: but she's generally pretty slow on news. I had a letter from her along with yours, today, but she didn't tell me the book is out. However, it's all right. I hope to be home 20 days from today, and then I'll see *her*, and that will make up for a whole year's dearth of news. I am right down grateful that she is looking strong and "lovelier than ever." I only wish I could see her look her level best, once—I think it would be a vision.

I have just spent a good part of this day browsing

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through the Royal Academy Exhibition of Landseer's paintings. They fill four or five great salons, and must number a good many hundreds. This is the only opportunity ever to see them, because the finest of them belong to the queen and she keeps them in her private apartments. Ah, they're wonderfully beautiful! There are such rich moonlights and dusks in "The Challenge" and "The Combat;" and in that long flight of birds across a lake in the subdued flush of sunset (or sunrise—for no man can ever tell tother from which in a picture, except it has the filmy morning mist breathing itself up from the water). And there is such a grave analytical profundity in the faces of "The Connoisseurs;" and such pathos in the picture of the fawn suckling its dead mother, on a snowy waste, with only the blood in the footprints to hint that she is not asleep. And the way he makes animals absolute flesh and blood—insomuch that if the room were darkened ever so little and a motionless living animal placed beside a painted one, no man could tell which was which.

I interrupted myself here, to drop a line to Shirley Brooks and suggest a cartoon for Punch. It was this. In one of the Academy salons (in the suite where these pictures are), a fine bust of Landseer stands on a pedestal in the centre of the room. I suggest that some of Landseer's best known animals be represented as having come down out of their frames in the moonlight and grouped themselves about the bust in mourning attitudes.

Well, old man, I am powerful glad to hear from you and shall be powerful glad to see you and Harmony. I am not going to the provinces because I cannot get halls that are large enough. I always felt cramped in Hanover Square Rooms, but I find that everybody here speaks with awe and respect of that prodigious place, and wonder that I could fill it so long.

I am *hoping* to be back in 20 days, but I have *so much* to go home to and enjoy with a jubilant joy, that it seems

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hardly possible that it can ever come to pass in so uncertain a world as this.

I have read the *novel*[1] here, and I like it. I have made no inquiries about it, though. My interest in a book ceases with the printing of it.—

With a world of love,

SAML.

[1] *The Gilded Age*, published during his absence, December, 1873.

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MARK TWAIN'S LONDON LECTURE NOTES PRESENTED TO CHARLES WARREN STODDARD AT THE END OF THE ENGAGEMENT

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XIII

LETTERS 1874. HARTFORD AND ELMIRA. A NEW STUDY. BEGINNING "TOM SAWYER." THE SELLERS PLAY

NATURALLY Redpath would not give him any peace now. His London success must not be wasted. At first his victim refused point-blank, and with great brevity. But he was overborne and persuaded, and made occasional appearances, wiring at last this final defiant word:

Telegram to James Redpath, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *March 3, 1874.*

JAMES REDPATH,—Why don't you congratulate me? I never expect to stand on a lecture platform again after Thursday night.

MARK.

That he was glad to be home again we may gather from a letter sent at this time to Doctor Brown, of Edinburgh.

To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:

FARMINGTON AVENUE, HARTFORD,
Feby. 28, 1874.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—We are all delighted with your commendations of the Gilded Age—and the more so because some of our newspapers have set forth the opinion that *Warner* really wrote the book and I only added my name to the title page in order to give it a larger sale. I wrote the first eleven chapters, every word and every line. I also wrote chapters 24, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37,

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42, 43, 45, 51, 52, 53, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, and portions of 35, 49 and 56. So I wrote 32 of the 63 chapters *entirely* and part of 3 others beside.

The fearful financial panic hit the book heavily, for we published it in the midst of it. But nevertheless in the 8 weeks that have now elapsed since the day we published, we have sold 40,000 copies; which gives £3,000 royalty to be divided between the authors. This is really the largest two-months' sale which any American book has ever achieved (unless one excepts the cheaper editions of Uncle Tom's Cabin). The average price of our book is 16 shillings a copy—Uncle Tom was 2 shillings a copy. But for the panic our sale would have been doubled, I verily believe. I do not believe the sale will ultimately go over 100,000 copies.

I shipped to you, from Liverpool, Darley's Illustrations of Judd's "Margaret" (the waiter at the Adelphi Hotel agreeing to ship it securely per parcel delivery,) and I do hope it did not miscarry, for we in America think a deal of Darley's[1] work. I shipped the novel ("Margaret") to you from here a *week* ago.

Indeed I *am* thankful for the wife and the child—and if there is one individual creature on all this footstool who is more thoroughly and uniformly and unceasingly *happy* than I am I defy the world to produce him and *prove* him. In my opinion, he doesn't exist. I was a mighty rough, coarse, unpromising subject when Livy took charge of me 4 years ago, and I may *still* be, to the rest of the world, but not to her. She has made a very creditable job of me.

Success to the Mark Twain Club!—and the novel shibboleth of the Whistle. Of course any member rising to speak would be required to preface his remark with a keen respectful whistle at the chair—the chair recognizing the speaker with an answering shriek, and then as the speech proceeded its gravity and force would be emphasized and

[1] Felix Octavius Carr Darley, 1822–1888, illustrator of the works of Irving, Cooper, etc. Probably the most distinguished American illustrator of his time.

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its impressiveness augmented by the continual interjection of whistles in place of punctuation-pauses; and the applause of the audience would be manifested in the same way. . . .

They've gone to luncheon, and I must follow. With strong love from us both.

your friend,

SAML. L. CLEMENS.

These were the days when the Howells and Clemens families began visiting back and forth between Boston and Hartford, and sometimes Aldrich came, though less frequently, and the gatherings at the homes of Warner and Clemens were full of never-to-be-forgotten happiness. Of one such visit Howells wrote:

"In the good-fellowship of that cordial neighborhood we had two such days as the aging sun no longer shines on in his round. There was constant running in and out of friendly houses, where the lively hosts and guests called one another by their christian names or nicknames, and no such vain ceremony as knocking or ringing at doors. Clemens was then building the stately mansion in which he satisfied his love of magnificence as if it had been another sealskin coat, and he was at the crest of the prosperity which enabled him to humor every whim or extravagance."

It was the delight of such a visit that kept Clemens constantly urging its repetition. One cannot but feel the genuine affection of these letters.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Mch. 1, 1874.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Now you will find us the most reasonable people in the world. We had thought of precipitating upon you George Warner and wife one day; Twichell and his jewel of a wife another day, and Chas. Perkins and wife another. Only those—simply members of our family, they are. But I'll close the door against them all—which will "fix" all of the lot except Twichell,

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who will no more hesitate to climb in at the back window than *nothing*.

And you shall go to bed when you please, get up when you please, talk when you please, read when you please. Mrs. Howells may even go to New York Saturday if she feels that she must, but if some gentle, unannoying coaxing can beguile her into putting that off a few days, we shall be more than glad, for I do wish she and Mrs. Clemens could have a good square chance to get acquainted with each other. But first and last and all the time, we want you to feel untrammeled and wholly free from restraint, here.

The date suits—all dates suit.

Yrs ever

MARK.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

FARMINGTON AVENUE, HARTFORD, *Mch. 20, 1874.*

DEAR HOWELLS,—You or Aldrich or both of you must come to Hartford to live. Mr. Hall, who lives in the house next to Mrs. Stowe's (just where we drive in to go to our new house) will sell for $16,000 or $17,000. The lot is 85 feet front and 150 deep—long time and easy payments on the purchase? You can do your work just as well here as in Cambridge, can't you? Come, will one of you boys buy that house? Now say yes.

Mrs. Clemens is an invalid yet, but is getting along pretty fairly.

We send best regards.

Yrs

MARK.

April found the Clemens family in Elmira. Mrs. Clemens was not over-strong, and the cares of house-building were many. They went early, therefore, remaining at the Langdon home in the city until Quarry Farm should feel a touch of warmer sun. Clemens wrote the news to Doctor Brown.

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To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:

ELMIRA, N. Y., *April 27, '74.*

DEAR DOCTOR,—This town is in the interior of the State of New York—and was my wife's birth-place. We are here to spend the whole summer. Although it is so near summer, we had a great snow-storm yesterday, and one the day before. This is rather breaking in upon our plans, as it may keep us down here in the valley a trifle longer than we desired. It gets fearfully hot here in the summer, so we spend our summers on top of a hill 6 or 700 feet high, about two or three miles from here—it never gets hot up there.

Mrs. Clemens is pretty strong, and so is the "little wifie" barring a desperate cold in the head—the child grows in grace and beauty marvellously. I wish the nations of the earth would combine in a baby show and give us a chance to compete. I must try to find one of her latest photographs to enclose in this. And this reminds me that Mrs. Clemens keeps urging me to ask you for your photograph and last night she said, "and be sure to ask him for a photograph of his sister, and Jock—but say *Master* Jock—do not be headless and forget that courtesy; he is Jock in our memories and our talk, but he has a right to his title when a body uses his name in a letter." Now I have got it all in—I can't have made any mistake *this* time. Miss Clara Spaulding looked in, a moment, yesterday morning, as bright and good as ever. She would like to lay her love at your feet if she knew I was writing—as would also fifty friends of ours whom you have never seen, and whose homage is as fervent as if the cold and clouds and darkness of a mighty sea did not lie between their hearts and you. Poor old Rab had not many "friends" at first, but if all his friends of today could gather to his grave from the four corners of the earth what a procession there would be! And Rab's friends are your friends.

I am going to work when we get on the hill—till then

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I've got to lie fallow, albeit against my will. We join in love to you and yours.

Your friend ever,
SAML. L. CLEMENS.

P. S. I enclose a specimen of villainy. A man pretends to be my brother and my lecture agent—gathers a great audience together in a city more than a thousand miles from here, and then pockets the money and elopes, leaving the audience to wait for the imaginary lecturer! I am after him with the law.

It was a historic summer at the Farm. A new baby arrived in June; a new study was built for Mark Twain by Mrs. Crane, on the hillside near the old quarry; a new book was begun in it —*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*—and a play, the first that Mark Twain had really attempted, was completed—the dramatization of *The Gilded Age*.

An early word went to Hartford of conditions at the Farm.

To Rev. and Mrs. Twichell, in Hartford:

ELMIRA, *June 11, '74.*

MY DEAR OLD JOE AND HARMONY,—The baby is here and is the great American Giantess—weighing 7¾ pounds. We had to wait a good long time for her, but she was full compensation when she *did* come.

The Modoc was delighted with it, and gave it her doll at once. There is nothing selfish about the Modoc. She is fascinated with the new baby. The Modoc rips and tears around out doors, most of the time, and consequently is as hard as a pine knot and as brown as an Indian. She is bosom friend to all the ducks, chickens, turkeys and guinea hens on the place. Yesterday as she marched along the winding path that leads up the hill through the red clover beds to the summer-house, there was a long procession of these fowls stringing contentedly after her, led by a stately rooster who can look over the Modoc's head. The devo-

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tion of these vassals has been purchased with daily largess of Indian meal, and so the Modoc, attended by her body-guard, moves in state wherever she goes.

Susie Crane has built the loveliest study for me, you ever saw. It is octagonal, with a peaked roof, each octagon filled with a spacious window, and it sits perched in complete isolation on top of an elevation that commands leagues of valley and city and retreating ranges of distant blue hills. It is a cosy nest, with just room in it for a sofa and a table and three or four chairs—and when the storms sweep down the remote valley and the lightning flashes above the hills beyond, and the rain beats upon the roof over my head, imagine the luxury of it! It stands 500 feet above the valley and 2½ miles from it.

However one must not write all day. We send continents of love to you and yours.

Affectionately

MARK.

We have mentioned before that Clemens had settled his mother and sister at Fredonia, New York, and when Mrs. Clemens was in condition to travel he concluded to pay them a visit.

It proved an unfortunate journey; the hot weather was hard on Mrs. Clemens, and harder still, perhaps, on Mark Twain's temper. At any period of his life a bore exasperated him, and in these earlier days he was far more likely to explode than in his mellower age. Remorse always followed—the price he paid was always costly. We cannot know now who was the unfortunate that invited the storm, but in the next letter we get the echoes of it and realize something of its damage.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in Fredonia:

ELMIRA, *Aug. 15.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I came away from Fredonia ashamed of myself;—almost too much humiliated to hold up my head and say good-bye. For I began to comprehend how much harm my conduct might do you socially in your village. I would have gone to that detest-

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able oyster-brained bore and apologized for my inexcusable rudeness to him, but that I was satisfied he was of too small a calibre to know how to receive an apology with magnanimity.

Pamela appalled me by saying people had hinted that they wished to visit Livy when she came, but that she had given them no encouragement. I feared that those people would merely comprehend that their courtesies were not wanted, and yet not know exactly *why* they were not wanted.

I came away feeling that in return for your constant and tireless efforts to secure our bodily comfort and make our visit enjoyable, I had basely repaid you by making you sad and sore-hearted and leaving you so. And the natural result has fallen to me likewise—for a guilty conscience has harassed me ever since, and I have not had one short quarter of an hour of peace to this moment.

You spoke of Middletown. Why not go there and live? Mr. Crane says it is only about a hundred miles this side of New York on the Erie road. The fact that one or two of you might prefer to live somewhere else is not a valid objection—there are no 4 people who would all choose the same place—so it will be vain to wait for the day when your tastes shall be a unit. I seriously fear that our visit has damaged you in Fredonia, and so I wish you were out of it.

The baby is fat and strong, and Susie the same. Susie was charmed with the donkey and the doll.

Ys affectionately

SAML.

P. S.—DEAR MA AND PAMELA—I am mainly grieved because I have been rude to a man who has been kind to you—and if you ever feel a desire to apologize to him for me, you may be sure that I will endorse the apology, no matter how strong it may be. I went to his bank to apologize to him, but my conviction was strong that he was not man enough to know how to take an apology and so I did not make it.—

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William Dean Howells was in these days writing those vividly realistic, indeed photographic stories which fixed his place among American men of letters. He had already written *Their Wedding Journey* and *A Chance Acquaintance* when *A Foregone Conclusion* appeared. For the reason that his own work was so different, and perhaps because of his fondness for the author, Clemens always greatly admired the books of Howells. Howells's exact observation and his gift for human detail seemed marvelous to Mark Twain, who with a bigger brush was inclined to record the larger rather than the minute aspects of life. The sincerity of his appreciation of Howells, however, need not be questioned, nor, for that matter, his detestation of Scott.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *Aug. 22, 1874.*

DEAR HOWELLS,—I have just finished reading the 'Foregone Conclusion' to Mrs. Clemens and we think you have even outdone yourself. I should think that this must be the daintiest, truest, most admirable workmanship that was ever put on a story. The creatures of God do not act out their natures more unerringly than yours do. If your genuine stories can die, I wonder by what right old Walter Scott's artificialities shall continue to live.

I brought Mrs. Clemens back from her trip in a dreadfully broken-down condition—so by the doctor's orders we unpacked the trunks sorrowfully to lie idle here another month instead of going at once to Hartford and proceeding to furnish the new house which is now finished. We hate to have it go longer desolate and tenantless, but cannot help it.

By and by, if the madam gets strong again, we are hoping to have the Grays there, and you and the Aldrich households, and Osgood, down to engage in an orgy with them.

Ys Ever

MARK.

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Howells was editor of the *Atlantic* by this time, and had been urging Clemens to write something suitable for that magazine. He had done nothing, however, until this summer at Quarry Farm. There, one night in the moonlight, Mrs. Crane's colored cook, who had been a slave, was induced to tell him her story. It was exactly the story to appeal to Mark Twain, and the kind of thing he could write. He set it down next morning, as nearly in her own words and manner as possible, without departing too far from literary requirements.

He decided to send this to Howells. He did not regard it very highly, but he would take the chance. An earlier offering to the magazine had been returned. He sent the "True Story," with a brief note:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *Sept. 2, '74.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—. . . I enclose also a "True Story" which has no humor in it. You can pay as lightly as you choose for that, if you want it, for it is rather out of my line. I have not altered the old colored woman's story except to begin at the beginning, instead of the middle, as she did—and traveled both ways. . .

Yrs Ever

MARK.

But Howells was delighted with it. He referred to its "realest kind of black talk," and in another place added, "This little story delights me more and more. I wish you had about forty of them."

Along with the "True Story" Mark Twain had sent the "Fable for Good Old Boys and Girls"; but this Howells returned, not, as he said, because he didn't like it, but because the *Atlantic* on matters of religion was just in that "Good Lord, Good Devil condition when a little fable like yours wouldn't leave it a single Presbyterian, Baptist, Unitarian, Episcopalian, Methodist, or Millerite *paying* subscriber, while all the deadheads would stick to it and abuse it in the denominational newspapers!"

But the shorter MS. had been only a brief diversion. Mark

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Twain was bowling along at a book and a play. The book was *Tom Sawyer*, as already mentioned, and the play a dramatization from *The Gilded Age*. Clemens had all along intended to dramatize the story of Colonel Sellers, and was one day thunderstruck to receive word from California that a San Francisco dramatist had appropriated his character in a play written for John T. Raymond. Clemens had taken out dramatic copyright on the book, and immediately stopped the performance by telegraph. A correspondence between the author and the dramatist followed, leading to a friendly arrangement by which the latter agreed to dispose of his version to Mark Twain. A good deal of discussion from time to time having arisen over the authorship of the Sellers play, as presented by Raymond, certain among the letters that follow may be found of special interest. Meanwhile we find Clemens writing to Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh, on these matters and events in general. The book MS., which he mentions as having put aside, was not touched again for nearly a year.

To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:

QUARRY FARM, NEAR ELMIRA, N. Y.
Sept. 4, 1874.

DEAR FRIEND,—I have been writing fifty pages of manuscript a day, on an average, for sometime now, on a book (a story) and consequently have been so wrapped up in it and so dead to anything else, that I have fallen mighty short in letter-writing. But night before last I discovered that that day's chapter was a failure, in conception, moral truth to nature, and execution—enough blemish to impair the excellence of almost any chapter—and so I must burn up the day's work and do it all over again. It was plain that I had worked myself out, pumped myself dry. So I knocked off, and went to playing billiards for a change. I haven't had an idea or a fancy for two days, now—an excellent time to write to friends who have plenty of ideas and fancies of their own, and so will prefer the offerings of the heart before those of the head. Day after to-morrow I go to a neighboring city to see a five-act drama of mine

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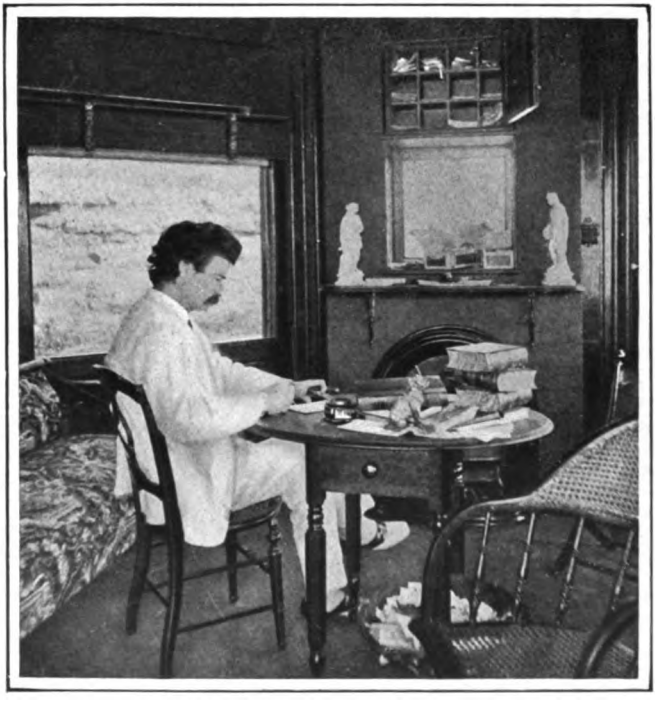
THE STUDY AT QUARRY FARM



MARK TWAIN AT WORK IN HIS STUDY

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brought out, and suggest amendments in it, and would about as soon spend a night in the Spanish Inquisition as sit there and be tortured with all the adverse criticisms I can contrive to imagine the audience is indulging in. But whether the play be successful or not, I hope I shall never feel obliged to see it performed a second time. My interest in my work dies a sudden and violent death when the work is done.

I have invented and patented a pretty good sort of scrap-book (I think) but I have backed down from letting it be known as mine just at present—for I can't stand being under discussion on a play and a scrap-book at the same time!

I shall be away two days, and then return to take our tribe to New York, where we shall remain five days buying furniture for the new house, and then go to Hartford and settle solidly down for the winter. After all that fallow time I ought to be able to go to work again on the book. We shall reach Hartford about the middle of September, I judge.

We have spent the past four months up here on top of a breezy hill, six hundred feet high, some few miles from Elmira, N. Y., and overlooking that town; (Elmira is my wife's birthplace and that of Susie and the new baby). This little summer house on the hill-top (named Quarry Farm because there's a quarry on it,) belongs to my wife's sister, Mrs. Crane.

A photographer came up the other day and wanted to make some views, and I shall send you the result per this mail.

My study is a snug little octagonal den, with a coal-grate, 6 big windows, one little one, and a wide doorway (the latter opening upon the distant town.) On hot days I spread the study wide open, anchor my papers down with brickbats and write in the midst of the hurricanes, clothed in the same thin linen we make shirts of. The study is nearly on the peak of the hill; it is right in front of the little perpendicular wall of rock left where they used to

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quarry stones. *On* the peak of the hill is an old arbor roofed with bark and covered with the vine you call the "American Creeper"—its green is almost bloodied with red. The Study is 30 yards below the old arbor and 100 yards above the dwelling-house—it is remote from *all* noises. . . .

Now isn't the whole thing pleasantly situated?

In the picture of me in the study you glimpse (through the left-hand window) the little rock bluff that rises behind the pond, and the bases of the little trees on top of it. The small square window is over the fireplace; the chimney divides to make room for it. Without the sterescope it looks like a framed picture. All the study windows have Venetian blinds; they long ago went out of fashion in America but they have not been replaced with anything half as good yet.

The study is built on top of a tumbled rock-heap that has morning-glories climbing about it and a stone stairway leading down through and dividing it.

There now—if you have not time to read all this, turn it over to "Jock" and drag in the judge to help.

Mrs. Clemens must put in a late picture of Susie—a picture which she maintains is good, but which I think is slander on the child.

We revisit the Rutland Street home many a time in fancy, for we hold every individual in it in happy and grateful memory.

Goodbye,

Your friend,

SAML. L. CLEMENS.

P. S.—I gave the P. O. Department a blast in the papers about sending misdirected letters of mine back to the writers for reshipment, and got a blast in return, through a New York daily, from the New York postmaster. But I notice that misdirected letters *find* me, now, without any unnecessary fooling around.

S. L. C.

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The new house in Hartford was now ready to be occupied, and in a letter to Howells, written a little more than a fortnight after the foregoing, we find them located in "part" of it. But what seems more interesting is that paragraph of the letter which speaks of close friendly relations still existing with the Warners, in that it refutes a report current at this time that there was a break between Clemens and Warner over the rights in the Sellers play. There was, in fact, no such rupture. Warner, realizing that he had no hand in the character of Sellers, and no share in the work of dramatization, generously yielded all claim to any part of the returns.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

FARMINGTON AVENUE, HARTFORD, *Sept. 20, 1874.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—All right, my boy, send proof sheets *here*. I amend dialect stuff by talking and talking and *talking* it till it sounds right—and I had difficulty with this negro talk because a negro sometimes (rarely) says "goin'" and sometimes "gwyne," and they make just such discrepancies in other words—and when you come to reproduce them on paper they look as if the variation resulted from the writer's carelessness. But I want to work at the proofs and get the dialect as nearly right as possible.

We are in part of the new house. Goodness knows when we'll get in the rest of it—full of workmen yet.

I worked a month at my play, and launched it in New York last Wednesday. I believe it will go. The newspapers have been complimentary. It is simply a *setting* for the one character, Col. Sellers—as a *play* I guess it will not bear a critical assault in force.

The Warners are as charming as ever. They go shortly to the devil for a year—(which is but a poetical way of saying they are going to afflict themselves with the unsurpassable—(bad word) of *travel* for a spell.) I believe they mean to go and see you, first—so they mean to start from heaven to the other place; not from earth. How is that?

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I think that is no slouch of a compliment—kind of a dim religious light about it. I enjoy that sort of thing.

Yrs ever

MARK.

Raymond, in a letter to the *Sun*, stated that not "one line" of the California dramatization had been used by Mark Twain, "except that which was taken bodily from *The Gilded Age*." Clemens himself, in a statement that he wrote for the Hartford *Post*, but suppressed, probably at the request of his wife, gave a full history of the play's origin, a matter of slight interest to-day.

Sellers on the stage proved a great success. The play had no special merit as a literary composition, but the character of Sellers delighted the public, and both author and actor were richly repaid for their entertainment.

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XIV

LETTERS 1874. MISSISSIPPI CHAPTERS. VISITS TO BOSTON. A JOKE ON ALDRICH

"COULDN'T you send me some such story as that colored one for our January number—that is, within a month?" wrote Howells, at the end of September, and during the week following Mark Twain struggled hard to comply, but without result. When the month was nearly up he wrote:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Oct. 24, 1874.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I have delayed thus long, hoping I might do something for the January number and Mrs. Clemens has diligently persecuted me day by day with urgings to go to work and do that something, but it's no use—I find I can't. We are in such a state of weary and endless confusion that my head won't go. So I give it up. . . .

Yrs ever,

MARK.

But two hours later, when he had returned from one of the long walks which he and Twichell so frequently took together, he told a different story.

Later, P.M. HOME, *24th '74.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I take back the remark that I can't write for the Jan. number. For Twichell and I have had a long walk in the woods and I got to telling him about old Mississippi days of steamboating glory and

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grandeur as I saw them (during 5 years) from the pilot-house. He said "What a virgin subject to hurl into a magazine!" I hadn't thought of that before. Would you like a series of papers to run through 3 months or 6 or 9?—or about 4 months, say?

Yrs ever,

MARK.

Howells himself had come from a family of pilots, and rejoiced in the idea. A few days later Mark Twain forwarded the first instalment of the new series—those wonderful chapters that begin, now, with chapter four in the Mississippi book. Apparently he was not without doubt concerning the manuscript, and accompanied it with a brief line.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

DEAR HOWELLS,—Cut it, scarify it, reject it—handle it with entire freedom.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

But Howells had no doubts as to the quality of the new find. He declared that the "piece" about the Mississippi was capital, that it almost made the water in their ice-pitcher turn muddy as he read it. "The sketch of the low-lived little town was so good that I could have wished that there was more of it. I want the sketches, if you can make them, every month."

The "low-lived little town" was Hannibal, and the reader can turn to the vivid description of it in the chapter already mentioned.

In the same letter Howells refers to a "letter from Limerick," which he declares he shall keep until he has shown it around—especially to Aldrich and Osgood.

The "letter from Limerick" has to do with a special episode. Mention has just been made of Mark Twain's walk with Twichell. Frequently their walks were extended tramps, and once in a daring moment one or the other of them proposed to walk to Boston. The time was November, and the bracing air made the proposition seem attractive. They were off one morning

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early, Twichell carrying a little bag, and Clemens a basket of luncheon. A few days before, Clemens had written Redpath that the Rev. J. H. Twichell and he expected to start at eight o'clock Thursday morning "to walk to Boston in twenty-four hours—or more. We shall telegraph Young's Hotel for rooms Saturday night, in order to allow for a low average of pedestrianism."

They did not get quite to Boston. In fact, they got only a little farther than the twenty-eight miles they made the first day. Clemens could hardly walk next morning, but they managed to get to North Ashford, where they took a carriage for the nearest railway station. There they telegraphed to Redpath and Howells that they would be in Boston that evening. Howells, of course, had a good supper and good company awaiting them at his home, and the pedestrians spent two happy days visiting and recounting their adventures.

It was one morning, at his hotel, that Mark Twain wrote the Limerick letter. It was addressed to Mrs. Clemens, but was really intended for Howells and Twichell and the others whom it mentions. It was an amusing fancy, rather than a letter, but it deserves place here.

To Mrs. Clemens—intended for Howells, Aldrich, etc.

BOSTON, *Nov. 16, 1935.* [*1874*]

DEAR LIVY,—You observe I still call this beloved old place by the name it had when I was young. *Limerick!* It is enough to make a body sick.

The gentlemen-in-waiting stare to see me sit here *telegraphing* this letter to you, and no doubt they are smiling in their sleeves. But *let* them! The slow old fashions are good enough for me, thank God, and I will none other. When I see one of these modern fools sit absorbed, holding the end of a telegraph wire in his hand, and reflect that a thousand miles away there is another fool hitched to the other end of it, it makes me frantic with rage; and then am I more implacably fixed and resolved than ever, to continue taking twenty minutes to telegraph you what I communicate in ten seconds by the new way if I would so debase myself. And when I see a whole silent, solemn

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drawing-room full of idiots sitting with their hands on each other's foreheads "communing," I tug the white hairs from my head and curse till my asthma brings me the blessed relief of suffocation. In our old day such a gathering talked pure drivel and "rot," mostly, but better that, a thousand times, than these dreary conversational funerals that oppress our spirits in this mad generation.

It is sixty years since I was here before. I walked hither, then, with my precious old friend. It seems incredible, now, that we did it in two days, but such is my recollection. I no longer mention that we walked back in a single day, it makes me so furious to see doubt in the face of the hearer. Men were *men* in those old times. Think of one of the puerile organisms in this effeminate age attempting such a feat.

My air-ship was delayed by a collision with a fellow from China loaded with the usual cargo of jabbering, copper-colored missionaries, and so I was nearly an hour on my journey. But by the goodness of God thirteen of the missionaries were crippled and several killed, so I was content to lose the time. I love to lose time, anyway, because it brings soothing reminiscences of the creeping railroad days of old, now lost to us forever.

Our game was neatly played, and successfully.—None expected us, of course. You should have seen the guards at the ducal palace stare when I said, "Announce his grace the Archbishop of Dublin and the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Hartford." Arrived within, we were all eyes to see the Duke of Cambridge and his Duchess, wondering if we might remember their faces, and they ours. In a moment, they came tottering in; he, bent and withered and bald; she blooming with wholesome old age. He peered through his glasses a moment, then screeched in a reedy voice: "Come to my arms! Away with titles—I'll know ye by no names but Twain and Twichell! Then fell he on our necks and jammed his trumpet in his ear, the which we filled with shoutings to this effect: "God bless you, old Howells, what is left of you!"

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We *talked* late that night—none of your silent idiot "communings" for us—of the olden time. We rolled a stream of ancient anecdotes over our tongues and drank till the lord Archbishop grew so mellow in the mellow past that Dublin ceased to be Dublin to him and resumed its sweeter forgotten name of New York. In truth he almost got back into his ancient religion, too, good Jesuit as he has always been since O'Mulligan the First established that faith in the Empire.

And we canvassed everybody. Bailey Aldrich, Marquis of Ponkapog, came in, got nobly drunk, and told us all about how poor Osgood lost his earldom and was hanged for conspiring against the second Emperor—but he didn't mention how near he himself came to being hanged, too, for engaging in the same enterprise. He was as chaffy as he was sixty years ago, too, and swore the Archbishop and I never walked to Boston—but there was never a day that Ponkapog wouldn't lie, so be it by the grace of God he got the opportunity.

The Lord High Admiral came in, a hale gentleman close upon seventy and bronzed by the suns and storms of many climes and scarred with the wounds got in many battles, and I told him how I had seen him sit in a high chair and eat fruit and cakes and answer to the name of Johnny. His granddaughter (the eldest) is but lately married to the youngest of the Grand Dukes, and so who knows but a day may come when the blood of the Howells's may reign in the land? I must not forget to say, while I think of it, that your new false teeth are done, my dear, and your wig. Keep your head well bundled with a shawl till the latter comes, and so cheat your persecuting neuralgias and rheumatisms. Would you believe it?—the Duchess of Cambridge is deafer than you—deafer than her husband. They call her to breakfast with a salvo of artillery; and usually when it thunders she looks up expectantly and says "come in. . . ."

The monument to the author of "Gloverson and His Silent Partners" is finished. It is the stateliest and the

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costliest ever erected to the memory of any man. This noble classic has now been translated into all the languages of the earth and is adored by all nations and known to all creatures. Yet I have conversed as familiarly with the author of it as I do with my own great-grandchildren.

I wish you could see old Cambridge and Ponkapog. I love them as dearly as ever, but privately, my dear, they are not much improvement on idiots. It is melancholy to hear them jabber over the same pointless anecdotes three and four times of an evening, forgetting that they had jabbered them over three or four times the evening before. Ponkapog still writes poetry, but the old-time fire has mostly gone out of it. Perhaps his best effort of late years is this:

"O soul, soul, soul of mine!
Soul, soul, soul of thine!
Thy soul, my soul, two souls entwine,
And sing thy lauds in crystal wine!"

This he goes about repeating to everybody, daily and nightly, insomuch that he is become a sore affliction to all that know him.

But I must desist. There are drafts here, everywhere and my gout is something frightful. My left foot hath resemblance to a snuff-bladder.

God be with you.

HARTFORD.

These to Lady Hartford, in the earldom of Hartford, in the upper portion of the city of Dublin.

One may imagine the joy of Howells and the others in this ludicrous extravaganza, which could have been written by no one but Mark Twain. It will hardly take rank as prophecy, though certainly true forecast in it is not wholly lacking.

Clemens was now pretty well satisfied with his piloting story, but he began to have doubts as to its title, "Old Times on the Mississippi." It seemed to commit him to too large an undertaking.

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From Mark Twain.

Dec. 3. 1874

My Dear Howells:

Let us change the heading to "Piloting on the Miss in the Old Times" — or to "Steamboating on the Miss in the Old Times" — or to "Personal Old Times on the Miss." — We could change it for Feb. if now too late for Jan. —

I suggest it because the present heading is too pretentious, too broad & general. It seems to command me to deliver a Second Book of Revelation to the world, & cover all the Old Times the Mississippi (dang that word, it is worse than Type or Egypt) Ever saw — whereas here I have finished Article No. III & am

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Dec. 3, 1874.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Let us change the heading to "Piloting on the Miss in the Old Times"—or to "Steamboating on the M. in Old Times"—or to "Personal Old Times on the Miss."—We could change it for Feb. if now too late for Jan.—I suggest it because the present heading is too pretentious, too broad and general. It seems to command me to deliver a Second Book of Revelation to the world, and cover all the Old Times the Mississippi (dang that word, it is worse than "type" or "Egypt") ever saw—whereas here I have finished Article No. III and am about to start on No. 4 and yet I have spoken of nothing but of Piloting as a science so far; and I doubt if I ever get beyond that portion of my subject. And I don't care to. Any muggins can write about Old Times on the Miss. of 500 different kinds, but I am the only man alive that can scribble about the piloting of that day—and no man ever has tried to scribble about it yet. Its newness pleases me all the time—and it is about the only new subject I know of. If I were to write fifty articles they would all be about pilots and piloting—therefore let's get the word Piloting into the heading. There's a sort of freshness about that, too.

Ys ever,

MARK.

But Howells thought the title satisfactory, and indeed it was the best that could have been selected for the series. He wrote every few days of his delight in the papers, and cautioned the author not to make an attempt to please any "supposed Atlantic audience," adding, "Yarn it off into my sympathetic ear." Clemens replied:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

H'T'F'D. *Dec. 8, 1874.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—It isn't the Atlantic audience that distresses me; for *it* is the only audience that I sit down

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before in perfect serenity (for the simple reason that it doesn't require a "humorist" to paint himself striped and stand on his head every fifteen minutes.) The trouble was, that I was only bent on "working up an atmosphere" and that is to me a most fidgety and irksome thing, sometimes. I avoid it, usually, but in this case it was absolutely necessary, else every reader would be applying the atmosphere of his own or sea experiences, and *that* shirt wouldn't fit, you know.

I could have sent this Article II a week ago, or more, but I couldn't bring myself to the drudgery of revising and correcting it. I have been at that tedious work 3 hours, now, and by *George* but I am glad it is over.

Say—I am as prompt as a clock, if I only know the *day* a thing is wanted—otherwise I am a natural procrastinaturalist. Tell me what day and date you want Nos. 3 and 4, and I will tackle and revise them and they'll be there to the minute.

I could wind up with No. 4, but there are some things more which I am powerfully moved to write. Which is natural enough, since I am a person who would quit authorizing in a minute to go to piloting, if the madam would stand it. I would rather sink a steamboat than eat, any time.

My wife was afraid to write you—so I said with simplicity, "*I* will give you the language—and ideas." Through the infinite grace of God there has not been such another insurrection in the family before as followed this. However, the letter was written, and promptly, too—whereas, heretofore she has *remained* afraid to do such things.

With kind regards to Mrs. Howells,

Yrs ever,

MARK.

The "Old Times" papers appeared each month in the *Atlantic* until July, 1875, and take rank to-day with Mark Twain's best work. When the first number appeared, John Hay wrote:

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"It is perfect; no more nor less. I don't see how you do it." Which was reported to Howells, who said: "What business has Hay, I should like to know, praising a favorite of mine? It's interfering."

These were the days when the typewriter was new. Clemens and Twichell, during their stay in Boston, had seen the marvel in operation, and Clemens had been unable to resist owning one. It was far from being the perfect machine of to-day; the letters were all capitals, and one was never quite certain, even of those. Mark Twain, however, began with enthusiasm and practised faithfully. On the day of its arrival he wrote two letters that have survived, the first to his brother, the other to Howells.

Typewritten letter to W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Dec. 9, 1874.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I want to add a short paragraph to article No. 1, when the proof comes. Merely a line or two, however.

I don't know whether I am going to make this type-writing machine go or nto,: that last word was intended for n-*not;* but I guess I shall make some sort of a succss of it before I run it very long. I am so thick-fingered that I miss the keys.

You neednt a swer this; I am only practicing to get three; *another slip-up there;* only practici?ng to get the hang of the thing. I notice I miss fire & get in a good many unnecessary letters and punctuation marks. I am simply using you for a target to bang at. Blame my cats but this thing requires genius in order to work it just right.

Yours ever,

(M)ARK.

Knowing Mark Twain, Howells wrote: "When you get tired of the machine send it to me." Clemens naturally did get tired of the machine; it was ruining his morals, he said. He presently offered it to Howells, who by this time hesitated, but eventually

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yielded and accepted it. If he was blasted by its influence the fact has not been recorded.

One of the famous *Atlantic* dinners came along in December. "Don't you dare to refuse that invitation," wrote Howells, "to meet Emerson, Aldrich, and all these boys at the Parker House, at six o'clock, Tuesday, December 15th. *Come!*"

Clemens had no desire to refuse; he sent word that he would come, and followed it with a characteristic line.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Sunday.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I want you to ask Mrs. Howells to let you stay all night at the Parker House and tell lies and have an improving time, and take breakfast with me in the morning. I will have a good room for you, and a fire. Can't you tell her it always makes you sick to go home late at night, or something like that? That sort of thing rouses Mrs. Clemens's sympathies, easily; the only trouble is to *keep* them up. Twichell and I talked till 2 or 3 in the morning, the night we supped at your house and it restored his health, on account of his being drooping for some time and made him much more robuster than what he was before. Will Mrs. Howells let you?

Yrs ever,

S. L. C.

Aldrich had issued that year a volume of poems, and he presented Clemens with a copy of it during this Boston visit. The letter of appreciation which follows contains also reference to an amusing incident; but we shall come to that presently.

To T. B. Aldrich, in Ponkapog, Mass.

FARMINGTON AVENUE, HARTFORD.

Dec. 18, 1874.

MY DEAR ALDRICH,—I read the "Cloth of Gold" through, coming down in the cars, and it is just *lightning* poetry—a thing which it gravels me to say because my own

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efforts in that line have remained so persistently unrecognized, in consequence of the envy and jealousy of this generation. "Baby Bell" always seemed perfection, before, but now that I have children it has got even beyond *that*. About the hour that I was reading it in the cars, Twichell was reading it at home and forthwith fell upon me with a burst of enthusiasm about it when I saw him. This was pleasant, because he has long been a lover of it.

"Thos. Bailey Aldrich responded" etc., "in one of the brightest speeches of the evening."

That is what the Tribune correspondent says. And that is what everybody that heard it said. Therefore, you keep still. Don't ever be so unwise as to go on trying to unconvince those people.

I've been skating around the place all day with some girls, with Mrs. Clemens in the window to do the applause. There would be a power of fun in skating if you could do it with somebody else's muscles.—There are about twenty boys booming by the house, now, and it is mighty good to look at.

I'm keeping you in mind, you see, in the matter of photographs. I have a couple to enclose in this letter and I want you to say you got them, and then I shall know I have been a good truthful child.

I am going to send more as I ferret them out, about the place.—And I won't forget that you are a "subscriber."

The wife and I unite in warm regards to you and Mrs. Aldrich.

Yrs ever,

S. L. CLEMENS.

A letter bearing the same date as the above went back to Howells, we find, in reference to still another incident, which perhaps should come first.

Mark Twain up to this time had worn the black "string" necktie of the West — a decoration which disturbed Mrs. Clemens, and invited remarks from his friends. He had per-

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sisted in it, however, up to the date of the *Atlantic* dinner, when Howells and Aldrich decided that something must be done about it.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Dec. 18, 1874.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I left No. 3, (Miss. chapter) in my eldest's reach, and it may have gone to the postman and it likewise may have gone into the fire. I confess to a dread that the latter is the case and that that stack of MS will have to be written over again. If so, O for the return of the lamented Herod!

You and Aldrich have made one woman deeply and sincerely grateful—Mrs. Clemens. For months—I may even say years—she had shown unaccountable animosity toward my neck-tie, even getting up in the night to take it with the tongs and blackguard it—sometimes also going so far as to threaten it.

When I said you and Aldrich had given me two *new* neck-ties, and that they were in a paper in my overcoat pocket, she was in a fever of happiness until she found I was going to frame them; then all the venom in her nature gathered itself together,—insomuch that I, being near to a door, went without, perceiving danger.

Now I wear one of the new neck-ties, nothing being sacred in Mrs. Clemens's eyes that can be perverted to a gaud that shall make the person of her husband more alluring than it was aforetime.

Jo Twichell was the delightedest old boy I ever saw, when he read the words you had written in that book. He and I went to the Concert of the Yale students last night and had a good time.

Mrs. Clemens dreads our going to New Orleans, but I tell her she'll have to give her consent this time.

With kindest regards unto ye both.

Yrs ever,

S. L. CLEMENS.

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The reference to New Orleans at the end of this letter grew naturally out of the enthusiasm aroused by the Mississippi papers. The more Clemens wrote about the river the more he wished to revisit it and take Howells with him. Howells was willing enough to go and they eventually arranged to take their wives on the excursion. This seemed all very well and possible, so long as the time was set for some date in the future still unfixed. But Howells was a busy editor, and it was much more easy for him to promise good-naturedly than to agree on a definite time of departure. He explained at length why he could not make the journey, and added: "Forgive me having led you on to fix a time; I never thought it would come to that; I supposed you would die, or something. I am really more sorry and ashamed than I can make it appear." So the beautiful plan was put aside, though it was not entirely abandoned for a long time.

We now come to the incident mentioned in Mark Twain's letter to Aldrich, of December the 18th. It had its beginning at the *Atlantic* dinner, where Aldrich had abused Clemens for never sending him any photographs of himself. It was suggested by one or the other that his name be put down as a "regular subscriber" for all Mark Twain photographs as they "came out." Clemens returned home and hunted up fifty-two different specimens, put each into an envelope, and began mailing them to him, one each morning. When a few of them had arrived Aldrich wrote, protesting.

"The police," he said, "have a way of swooping down on that kind of publication. The other day they gobbled up an entire edition of *The Life in New York*."

Whereupon Clemens bundled up the remaining collection—forty-five envelopes of photographs and prints—and mailed them together.

Aldrich wrote, now, violently declaring the perpetrator of the outrage to be known to the police; that a sprawling yellow figure against a green background had been recognized as an admirable likeness of Mark Twain, *alias* the Jumping Frog, a well-known Californian desperado, formerly the chief of Henry Plummer's band of road agents in Montana. The letter was signed, "T. Bayleigh, Chief of Police." On the back of the envelope "T. Bayleigh" had also written that it was "no use for the person to send any more letters, as the post-office at that

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point was to be blown up. Forty-eight hogs-head of nitro-glycerine had been syrupticiously introduced into the cellar of the building, and more was expected. R.W.E. H.W.L. O. W.H., and other conspirators in masks have been seen flitting about the town for some days past. The greatest excitement combined with the most intense quietness reigns at Ponkapog."

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XV

LETTERS FROM HARTFORD, 1875. MUCH CORRESPONDENCE WITH HOWELLS

ORION CLEMENS had kept his job with Bliss only a short time. His mental make-up was such that it was difficult for him to hold any position long. He meant to do well, but he was unfortunate in his efforts. His ideas were seldom practical, his nature was yielding and fickle. He had returned to Keokuk presently, and being convinced there was a fortune in chickens, had prevailed upon his brother to purchase for him a little farm not far from the town. But the chicken business was not lively and Orion kept the mail hot with manuscripts and propositions of every sort, which he wanted his brother to take under advisement.

Certainly, to Mark Twain Orion Clemens was a trial. The letters of the latter show that scarcely one of them but contains the outline of some rainbow-chasing scheme, full of wild optimism, and the certainty that somewhere just ahead lies the pot of gold. Only, now and then, there is a letter of abject humiliation and complete surrender, when some golden vision, some iridescent soap-bubble, had vanished at his touch. Such depression did not last; by sunrise he was ready with a new dream, new enthusiasm, and with a new letter inviting his "brother Sam's" interest and investment. Yet, his fear of incurring his brother's displeasure was pitiful, regardless of the fact that he constantly employed the very means to insure that result. At one time Clemens made him sign a sworn agreement that he would not suggest any plan or scheme of investment for the period of twelve months. Orion must have kept this agreement. He would have gone to the stake before he would have violated an oath, but the stake would have probably been no greater punishment than his sufferings that year.

On the whole, Samuel Clemens was surprisingly patient and considerate with Orion, and there was never a time that he was

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not willing to help. Yet there were bound to be moments of exasperation; and once, when his mother, or sister, had written, suggesting that he encourage his brother's efforts, he felt moved to write at considerable freedom.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in Fredonia, N. Y.:

HARTFORD, *Sunday, 1874.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I saw Gov. Jewell today and he said he was still moving in the matter of Sammy's appointment [1] and would stick to it till he got a result of a positive nature one way or the other, but thus far he did not know whether to expect success or defeat.

Ma, whenever you need money I hope you won't be backward about saying so—you can always have it. We stint ourselves in some ways, but we have no desire to stint you. And we don't intend to, either.

I *can't* "encourage" Orion. Nobody can do that, conscientiously, for the reason that before one's letter has time to reach him he is off on some new wild-goose chase.—Would you encourage in literature a man who, the older he grows the worse he writes? Would you encourage Orion in the glaring insanity of studying law? If he were packed and crammed full of law, it would be worthless lumber to him, for his is such a capricious and ill-regulated mind that he would apply the principles of the law with no more judgment than a child of ten years. I know what I am saying. I laid one of the plainest and simplest of legal questions before Orion once, and the helpless and hopeless mess he made of it was absolutely astonishing. Nothing aggravates me so much as to have Orion mention law or literature to me.

Well, I cannot encourage him to try the ministry, because he would change his religion so fast that he would have to keep a traveling agent under wages to go ahead of him to engage pulpits and board for him.

[1] As a West Point cadet.

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I cannot conscientiously encourage him to do *anything* but potter around his little farm and put in his odd hours contriving new and impossible projects at the rate of 365 a year—which is his customary average. He says he did well in Hannibal! Now there is a man who ought to be entirely satisfied with the grandeurs, emoluments and activities of a hen farm—

If you ask me to pity Orion, I can do that. I can do it every day and all day long. But one can't "encourage" quick-silver, because the instant you put your finger on it it isn't there. No, I am saying too much—he *does* stick to his literary and legal aspirations; and he naturally *would* select the very two things which he is wholly and preposterously unfitted for. If I ever become able, I mean to put Orion on a regular pension without revealing the fact that it is a pension. That is best for him. Let him consider it a periodical loan, and pay interest out of the principal. Within a year's time he would be looking upon himself as a benefactor of mine, in the way of furnishing me a good permanent investment for money, and that would make him happy and satisfied with himself. If he had money he would share with me in a moment and I have no disposition to be stingy with *him*.

Affly

SAM.

Livy sends love.

The New Orleans plan was not wholly dead at this time. Howells wrote near the end of January that the matter was still being debated, now and then, but was far from being decided upon. He hoped to go somewhere with Mrs. Howells for a brief time in March, he said. Clemens, in haste, replied:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Jan. 26, 1875.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—When Mrs. Clemens read your letter she said: "Well, then, wherever they go, in March, the direction will be southward and so they must give us a

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visit on the way." I do not know what sort of control you may be under, but when my wife speaks as positively as that, I am not in the habit of talking back and getting into trouble. Situated as I am, I would not be able to understand, now, how you could pass by this town without feeling that you were running a wanton risk and doing a daredevil thing. I consider it settled that you are to come in March, and I would be sincerely sorry to learn that you and Mrs. Howells feel differently about it.

The piloting material has been uncovering itself by degrees, until it has exposed such a huge hoard to my view that a whole book will be required to contain it if I use it. So I have agreed to write the book for Bliss.[1] I won't be able to run the articles in the Atlantic later than the September number, for the reason that a subscription book issued in the fall has a much larger sale than if issued at any other season of the year. It is funny when I reflect that when I originally wrote you and proposed to do from 6 to 9 articles for the magazine, the vague thought in my mind was that 6 might exhaust the material and 9 would be pretty sure to do it. Or rather it *seems* to me that that was my thought—can't tell at this distance. But in truth 9 chapters don't now seem to more than open up the subject fairly and start the yarn to wagging.

I have been sick a-bed several days, for the first time in 21 years. How little confirmed invalids appreciate their advantages. I was able to read the English edition of the Greville Memoirs through without interruption, take my meals in bed, neglect all business without a pang, and smoke 18 cigars a day. I try not to look back upon these 21 years with a feeling of resentment, and yet the partialities of Providence do seem to me to be slathered around (as one may say) without that gravity and attention to detail which the real importance of the matter would seem to suggest.

Yrs ever

MARK.

[1] The book idea was later given up for the time being.

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The New Orleans idea continued to haunt the letters. The thought of drifting down the Mississippi so attracted both Clemens and Howells, that they talked of it when they met, and wrote of it when they were separated. Howells, beset by uncertainties, playfully tried to put the responsibility upon his wife. Once he wrote: "She says in the noblest way, 'Well, go to New Orleans, if you want to so *much*' (you know the tone). I suppose it will do if I let you know about the middle of February?"

But they had to give it up in the end. Howells wrote that he had been under the weather, and on half work the whole winter. He did not feel that he had earned his salary, he said, or that he was warranted in taking a three weeks' pleasure trip. Clemens offered to pay all the expenses of the trip, but only indefinite postponement followed. It would be seven years more before Mark Twain would return to the river, and then not with Howells.

In a former chapter mention has been made of Charles Warren Stoddard, whom Mark Twain had known in his California days. He was fond of Stoddard, who was a facile and pleasing writer of poems and descriptive articles. During the period that he had been acting as Mark Twain's secretary in London, he had taken pleasure in collecting for him the news reports of the celebrated Tichborn Claimant case, then in the English courts. Clemens thought of founding a story on it, and did, in fact, use the idea, though *The American Claimant*, which he wrote years later, had little or no connection with the Tichborn episode.

To C. W. Stoddard:

HARTFORD, *Feb. 1, 1875.*

DEAR CHARLEY,—All right about the Tichborn scrap-books; send them along when convenient. I mean to have the Beecher-Tilton trial scrap-book as a companion. . . .

I am writing a series of 7-page articles for the Atlantic at $20 a page; but as they do not pay anybody else as much as that, I do not complain (though at the same time I do swear that I am not content.) However the awful respectability of the magazine makes up.

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I have cut your articles about San Marco out of a New York paper (Joe Twichell saw it and brought it home to me with loud admiration,) and sent it to Howells. It is too bad to fool away such good literature in a perishable daily journal.

Do remember us kindly to Lady Hardy and all that rare family—my wife and I so often have pleasant talks about them.

Ever your friend,
SAML. L. CLEMENS.

The price received by Mark Twain for the Mississippi papers, as quoted in this letter, furnishes us with a realizing sense of the improvement in the literary market, with the advent of a flood of cheap magazines and the Sunday newspaper. The *Atlantic* page probably contained about a thousand words, which would make his price average, say, two cents per word. Thirty years later, when his fame was not much more extended, his pay for the same matter would have been fifteen times as great, that is to say, at the rate of thirty cents per word. But in that early time there were no Sunday magazines—no literary magazines at all except the *Atlantic*, and *Harpers*, and a few fashion periodicals. Probably there were news-stands, but it is hard to imagine what they must have looked like without the gay pictorial cover-femininity that to-day pleases and elevates the public and makes author and artist affluent.

Clemens worked steadily on the river chapters, and Howells was always praising him and urging him to go on. At the end of January he wrote: "You're doing the science of piloting splendidly. Every word's interesting. And don't you drop the series 'til you've got every bit of anecdote and reminiscence into it."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Feb. 10, 1875.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Your praises of my literature gave me the solidest gratification; but I never did have the fullest confidence in my critical penetration, and now your verdict on S—— has knocked what little I *did* have

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gally-west! *I* didn't enjoy his *gush*, but I thought a lot of his similes were ever so vivid and good. But it's just my luck; every time I go into convulsions of admiration over a picture and want to buy it right away before I've lost the chance, some wretch who really understands art comes along and damns it. But I don't mind. I would rather have my ignorance than another man's knowledge, because I have got so much more *of* it.

I send you No. 5 today. I have written and re-written the first half of it three different times, yesterday and today, and at last Mrs. Clemens says it will do. I never saw a woman so hard to please about things she doesn't know anything about.

Yours ever,

MARK.

Of course, the reference to his wife's criticism in this is tenderly playful, as always—of a pattern with the severity which he pretends for her in the next.

To Mrs. W. D. Howells, in Boston:

1875.

DEAR MRS. HOWELLS,—Mrs. Clemens is delighted to get the pictures, and so am I. I can perceive in the group, that Mr. Howells is feeling as I so often feel, viz:—"Well, no doubt I am in the wrong, though I do not know how or where or why—but anyway it will be safest to look meek, and walk circumspectly for a while, and not *discuss* the thing." And you look exactly as Mrs. Clemens does after she has said, "Indeed I do not *wonder* that you can frame no reply: for you know only too well, that your conduct admits of no excuse, palliation or argument—*none!*"

I shall just delight in that group on account of the good old human domestic spirit that pervades it—bother these family groups that put on a state aspect to get their pictures taken in.

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We want a heliotype made of *our* eldest daughter. How soft and rich and lovely the picture is. Mr. Howells must tell me how to proceed in the matter.

Truly yours

SAM. L. CLEMENS.

In the next letter we have a picture of Susy[1] Clemens's third birthday, certainly a pretty picture, and as sweet and luminous and tender to-day as it was forty years ago—as it will be a hundred years hence, if these lines should survive that long. The letter is to her uncle Charles Langdon, the "Charlie" of the *Quaker City*. "Atwater" was associated with the Langdon coal interests in Elmira. "The play" is, of course, "The Gilded Age."

To Charles Langdon, in Elmira:

Mch. 19, 1875.

DEAR CHARLIE,—Livy, after reading your letter, used her severest form of expression about Mr. Atwater—to-wit: She did not "*approve*" of his conduct. This made me shudder; for it was equivalent to Allie Spaulding's saying "Mr. Atwater is a *mean thing;*" or Rev. Thomas Beecher's saying "Damn that Atwater," or my saying "I wish Atwater was three hundred million miles in ——!"

However, Livy does not often get into one of these furies, God be thanked.

In Brooklyn, Baltimore, Washington, Cincinnati, St. Louis and Chicago, the play paid me an average of nine hundred dollars a week. In smaller towns the average is $400 to $500.

This is Susie's birth-day. Lizzie brought her in at 8.30 this morning (before we were up) hooded with a blanket, red curl-papers in her hair, a great red japonica in one hand (for Livy) and a yellow rose-bud nestled in violets

[1] This spelling of the name was adopted somewhat later and much preferred. It appears as "Susie" in most of the earlier letters.

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(for my buttonhole) in the other—and she looked wonderfully pretty. She delivered her memorials and received her birth-day kisses. Livy laid her japonica down to get a better "holt" for kissing—which Susie presently perceived, and became thoughtful: then said sorrowfully, turning the great deeps of her eyes upon her mother: "Don't you care for you wow?"

Right after breakfast we got up a rousing wood fire in the main hall (it is a cold morning) illuminated the place with a rich glow from all the globes of the newell chandelier, spread a bright rug before the fire, set a circling row of chairs (pink ones and dove-colored) and in the midst a low invalid-table covered with a fanciful cloth and laden with the presents—a pink azalia in lavish bloom from Rosa; a gold inscribed Russia-leather bible from Patrick and Mary; a gold ring (inscribed) from "Maggy Cook;" a silver thimble (inscribed with motto and initials) from Lizzie; a rattling mob of Sunday clad dolls from Livy and Annie, and a Noah's Ark from me, containing 200 wooden animals such as only a human being could create and only God call by name without referring to the passenger list. Then the family and the seven servants assembled there, and Susie and the "Bay" arrived in state from above, the Bay's head being fearfully and wonderfully decorated with a profusion of blazing red flowers and overflowing cataracts of lycopodium. Wee congratulatory notes accompanied the presents of the servants. I tell you it was a great occasion and a striking and cheery group, taking all the surroundings into account and the wintry aspect outside.

(Remainder missing.)

There was to be a centennial celebration that year of the battles of Lexington and Concord, and Howells wrote, urging Clemens and his wife to visit them and attend it. Mrs. Clemens did not go, and Clemens and Howells did not go, either—to the celebration. They had their own ideas about getting there, but found themselves unable to board the thronged train at Concord, and went tramping about in the cold and mud, hunt-

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ing a conveyance, only to return at length to the cheer of the home, defeated and rather low in spirits.

Twichell, who went on his own hook, had no such difficulties. To Howells, Mark Twain wrote the adventures of this athletic and strenuous exponent of the gospel.

The "Winnie" mentioned in this letter was Howells's daughter Winifred. She had unusual gifts, but did not live to develop them.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

FARMINGTON AVENUE, HARTFORD. *Apl. 23, 1875.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I've got Mrs. Clemens's picture before me, and hope I shall not forget to send it with this.

Joe Twichell preached morning and evening here last Sunday; took midnight train for Boston; got an early breakfast and started by rail at 7.30 A. M. for Concord; swelled around there until 1 P. M., seeing everything; then traveled *on top* of a train to Lexington; saw everything there; traveled on top of a train to Boston, (with hundreds in company) deluged with dust, smoke and cinders; yelled and hurrahed all the way like a schoolboy; lay flat down to dodge numerous bridges, and sailed into the depot, howling with excitement and as black as a chimney-sweep; got to Young's Hotel at 7 P. M.; sat down in reading-room and immediately fell asleep; was promptly awakened by a porter who supposed he was drunk; wandered around an hour and a half; then took 9 P. M. train, sat down in smoking car and remembered nothing more until awakened by conductor as the train came into Hartford at 1.30 A. M. Thinks he had simply a glorious time—and wouldn't have missed the Centennial for the world. He would have run out to see us a moment at Cambridge, but was too dirty. I wouldn't have wanted him there—his appalling energy would have been an insufferable reproach to mild adventurers like you and me.

Well, he is welcome to the good time he had—I had a deal better one. My narrative has made Mrs. Clemens wish she could have been there.—When I think over what

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a splendid good sociable time I had in your house I feel ever so thankful to the wise providence that thwarted our several ably-planned and ingenious attempts to get to Lexington. I am coming again before long, and then she shall be of the party.

Now you said that you and Mrs. Howells could run down here nearly any Saturday. Very well then, let us call it next Saturday, for a "starter." Can you do that? By that time it will really be spring and you won't freeze. The birds are already out; a small one paid us a visit yesterday. We entertained it and let it go again, Susie protesting.

The spring laziness is already upon me—insomuch that the spirit begins to move me to cease from Mississippi articles and everything else and give myself over to idleness until we go to New Orleans. I have one article already finished, but somehow it doesn't seem as proper a chapter to close with as the one already in your hands. I hope to get in a mood and rattle off a *good* one to finish with—but just now all my moods are lazy ones.

Winnie's literature sings through me yet! Surely that child has one of these "futures" before her.

Now try to come—will you?

With the warmest regards of the two of us—

Yrs ever,

S. L. CLEMENS.

Mrs. Clemens sent a note to Mrs. Howells, which will serve as a pendant to the foregoing.

From Mrs. Clemens to Mrs. Howells, in Boston:

MY DEAR MRS. HOWELLS,—Don't dream for one instant that my not getting a letter from you kept me from Boston. I am too anxious to go to let such a thing as that keep me.

Mr. Clemens did have such a good time with you and Mr. Howells. He evidently has no regret that he did not

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get to the Centennial. I was driven nearly distracted by his long account of Mr. Howells and his wanderings. I would keep asking if they ever got there, he would never answer but made me listen to a very minute account of everything that they did. At last I found them back where they started from.

If you find misspelled words in this note, you will remember my infirmity and not hold me responsible.

Affectionately yours,

LIVY L. CLEMENS.

In spite of his success with the Sellers play and his itch to follow it up, Mark Twain realized what he believed to be his literary limitations. All his life he was inclined to consider himself wanting in the finer gifts of character-shading and delicate portrayal. Remembering *Huck Finn*, and the rare presentation of *Joan of Arc*, we may not altogether agree with him. Certainly, he was never qualified to delineate those fine artificialities of life which we are likely to associate with culture, and perhaps it was something of this sort that caused the hesitation confessed in the letter that follows. Whether the plan suggested interested Howells or not we do not know. In later years Howells wrote a novel called *The Story of a Play;* this may have been its beginning.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

FARMINGTON AVENUE, HARTFORD, *Apl. 24, 1875.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—An actor named D. H. Harkins has been here to ask me to put upon paper a 5-act play which he has been mapping out in his mind for 3 or 4 years. He sat down and told me his plot all through, in a clear, bright way, and I was a deal taken with it; but it is a line of characters whose fine shading and artistic development requires an abler hand than mine; so I easily perceived that I must not make the attempt. But I liked the man, and thought there was a good deal of stuff in him; and therefore I wanted his play to be written, and by a capable hand, too. So I suggested you, and said

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I would write and see if you would be willing to undertake it. If you like the idea, he will call upon you in the course of two or three weeks and describe his plot and his characters. Then if it doesn't strike you favorably, of course you can simply decline; but it seems to me well worth while that you should hear what he has to say. You could also "average" him while he talks, and judge whether he could play your priest—though I doubt if any man can do that justice.

Shan't I write him and say he may call? If you wish to communicate directly with him instead, his address is "Larchmont Manor, Westchester Co., N. Y."

Do you know, the chill of that 19th of April seems to be in my bones yet? I am inert and drowsy all the time. That was villainous weather for a couple of wandering children to be out in.

Ys ever

MARK.

The sinister typewriter did not find its way to Howells for nearly a year. Meantime, Mark Twain had refused to allow the manufacturers to advertise his ownership. He wrote to them:

HARTFORD, *March 19, 1875.*

Please do not use my name in any way. Please do not even divulge the fact that I own a machine. I have entirely stopped using the typewriter, for the reason that I never could write a letter with it to anybody without receiving a request by return mail that I would not only describe the machine, but state what progress I had made in the use of it, etc., etc. I don't like to write letters, and so I don't want people to know I own this curiosity-breeding little joker.

Three months later the machine was still in his possession. Bliss had traded a twelve-dollar saddle for it, but apparently showed little enthusiasm in his new possession.

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To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

June 25, 1875.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I told Patrick to get some carpenters and box the machine and send it to you—and found that Bliss had sent for the machine and carried it off. I have been *talking* to you and *writing* to you as if you were present when I traded the machine to Bliss for a twelve-dollar saddle worth $25 (cheating him outrageously, of course—but conscience got the upper hand again and I told him before I left the premises that I'd pay for the saddle if he didn't like the machine—on condition that he donate said machine to a charity)—

This was a little over *five weeks* ago—so I had long ago concluded that Bliss didn't want the machine and *did* want the saddle—wherefore I jumped at the chance of shoving the machine off onto you, saddle or no saddle so I got the blamed thing out of my sight.

The saddle hangs on Tara's walls down below in the stable, and the machine is at Bliss's grimly pursuing its appointed mission, slowly and implacably rotting away another man's chances for salvation.

I have sent Bliss word *not* to donate it to a charity (though it is a pity to fool away a chance to do a charity an ill turn,) but to let me know when he has got his dose, because I've got another candidate for damnation. You just wait a couple of weeks and if you don't see the Type-Writer come tilting along toward Cambridge with an unsatisfied appetite in its eye, I lose my guess.

Don't you be mad about this blunder, Howells—it only comes of a bad memory, and the stupidity which is inseparable from true genius. Nothing intentionally criminal in it.

Yrs ever

MARK.

It was November when Howells finally fell under the baleful influence of the machine. He wrote:

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"The typewriter came Wednesday night, and is already beginning to have its effect on me. Of course, it doesn't work: if I can persuade some of the letters to get up against the ribbon they won't get down again without digital assistance. The treadle refuses to have any part or parcel in the performance; and *I* don't know how to get the roller to turn with the paper. Nevertheless I have begun several letters to My d-a-r *lemàns*, as it prefers to spell your respected name, and I don't despair yet of sending you something in its beautiful handwriting—after I've had a man out from the agent's to put it in order. It's fascinating in the meantime, and it wastes my time like an old friend."

The Clemens family remained in Hartford that summer, with the exception of a brief season at Bateman's Point, R. I., near Newport. By this time Mark Twain had taken up and finished the *Tom Sawyer* story begun two years before. Naturally he wished Howells to consider the MS.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *July 5th, 1875.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I have finished the story and didn't take the chap beyond boyhood. I believe it would be fatal to do it in any shape but autobiographically—like Gil Blas. I perhaps made a mistake in not writing it in the first person. If I went on, now, and took him into manhood, he would just lie like all the one-horse men in literature and the reader would conceive a hearty contempt for him. It is *not* a boy's book, at all. It will only be read by adults. It is only written for adults.

Moreover the book is plenty long enough as it stands. It is about 900 pages of MS, and may be 1000 when I shall have finished "working up" vague places; so it would make from 130 to 150 pages of the Atlantic—about what the Foregone Conclusion made, isn't it?

I would dearly like to see it in the Atlantic, but I doubt if it would pay the publishers to buy the privilege, or me to sell it. Bret Harte has sold his novel (same size as mine, I should say) to Scribner's Monthly for $6,500 (publication to begin in September, I think,) and he gets

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a royalty of 7½ per cent from Bliss in book form afterwards. He gets a royalty of ten per cent on it in England (issued in serial numbers) and the same royalty on it in book form afterwards, and is to receive an advance payment of five hundred pounds the day the first No. of the serial appears. If I could do as well, here, and there, with mine, it might possibly pay me, but I seriously doubt it —though it is likely I could do better in England than Bret, who is not widely known there.

You see I take a vile, mercenary view of things—but then my household expenses are something almost ghastly.

By and by I shall take a boy of twelve and run him on through life (in the first person) but not Tom Sawyer—he would not be a good character for it.

I wish you would promise to read the MS of Tom Sawyer some time, and see if you don't really decide that I am right in closing with him as a boy—and point out the most glaring defects for me. It is a tremendous favor to ask, and I expect you to refuse and would be ashamed to expect you to do otherwise. But the thing has been so many months in my mind that it seems a relief to snake it out. I don't know any other person whose judgment I could venture to take fully and entirely. Don't hesitate about saying no, for I know how your time is taxed, and I would have honest need to blush if you said yes.

Osgood and I are "going for" the puppy G—— on infringement of trademark. To win one or two suits of this kind will set literary folks on a firmer bottom. I wish Osgood would sue for stealing Holmes's poem. Wouldn't it be gorgeous to sue R—— for *petty larceny*? I will promise to go into court and swear I think him capable of stealing pea-nuts from a blind pedlar.

Yrs ever,

CLEMENS.

Of course Howells promptly replied that he would read the story, adding: "You've no idea what I may ask you to do for me, some day. I'm sorry that you can't do it for the

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Atlantic, but I succumb. Perhaps you will do Boy No. 2 for us." Clemens, conscience-stricken, meantime, hastily put the MS. out of reach of temptation.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

July 13, 1875.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Just as soon as you consented I realized all the atrocity of my request, and straightway blushed and weakened. I telegraphed my theatrical agent to come here and carry off the MS and copy it.

But I will gladly send it to you if you will do as follows: dramatize it, if you perceive that you can, and take, for your remuneration, half of the first $6000 which I receive for its representation on the stage. You could alter the plot entirely, if you chose. I could help in the work, most cheerfully, after you had arranged the plot. I have my eye upon two young girls who can play "Tom" and "Huck." I believe a good deal of a drama can be made of it. Come—can't you tackle this in the odd hours of your vacation? or later, if you prefer?

I do wish you could come down once more before your holiday. I'd give anything!

Yrs ever,

MARK.

Howells wrote that he had no time for the dramatization and urged Clemens to undertake it himself. He was ready to read the story, whenever it should arrive. Clemens did not hurry, however. The publication of *Tom Sawyer* could wait. He already had a book in press—the volume of *Sketches New and Old*, which he had prepared for Bliss several years before.

Sketches was issued that autumn, and Howells gave it a good notice—possibly better than it deserved.

Considered among Mark Twain's books to-day, the collection of sketches does not seem especially important. With the exception of the frog story and the "True Story" most of those included might be spared. Clemens himself confessed to Howells that he wished, when it was too late, that he had destroyed a

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number of them. The book, however, was distinguished in a special way: it contains Mark Twain's first utterance in print on the subject of copyright, a matter in which he never again lost interest. The absurdity and injustice of the copyright laws both amused and irritated him, and in the course of time he would be largely instrumental in their improvement. In the book his open petition to Congress that all property rights, as well as literary ownership, should be put on the copyright basis and limited to a "beneficent term of forty-two years," was more or less of a joke, but, like so many of Mark Twain's jokes, it was founded on reason and justice.

He had another idea, that was not a joke: an early plan in the direction of international copyright. It was to be a petition signed by the leading American authors, asking the United States to declare itself to be the first to stand for right and justice by enacting laws against the piracy of foreign books. It was a rather utopian scheme, as most schemes for moral progress are, in their beginning. It would not be likely ever to reach Congress, but it would appeal to Howells and his Cambridge friends. Clemens wrote, outlining his plan of action.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Sept. 18, 1875.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—My plan is this—you are to get Mr. Lowell and Mr. Longfellow to be the first signers of my copyright petition; you must sign it yourself and get Mr. Whittier to do likewise. Then Holmes will sign—he said he would if he didn't have to stand at the head. Then I'm fixed. I will then put a gentlemanly chap under wages and send him personally to every author of distinction in the country, and corral the rest of the signatures. Then I'll have the whole thing lithographed (about a thousand copies) and move upon the President and Congress *in person*, but in the subordinate capacity of a party who is merely the agent of better and wiser men —men whom the country cannot venture to laugh at.

I will ask the President to recommend the thing in his message (and if he should ask me to sit down and frame

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the paragraph for him I should blush—but still I would frame it.)

Next I would get a prime leader in Congress; I would also see that votes enough to carry the measure were privately secured before the bill was offered. This I would try through my leader and my friends there.

And *then* if Europe chose to go on stealing from us, we would say with noble enthusiasm, "American lawmakers *do steal*—but not from foreign authors—*not from foreign authors!*"

You see, what I want to drive into the Congressional mind is the simple fact that the moral law is "*Thou* shalt not steal"—no matter what Europe may do.

I swear I can't see any use in robbing European authors for the benefit of American booksellers, anyway.

If we can ever get this thing through Congress, we can try making copyright *perpetual*, some day. There would be no sort of use in it, since only one book in a hundred millions outlives the present copyright term—no sort of use except that the writer of that one book have his *rights*—which is something.

If we only had some God in the country's laws, instead of being in such a sweat to get Him into the Constitution, it would be better all around.

The only man who ever signed my petition with alacrity, and said that the fact that a thing was *right* was all-sufficient, was Rev. Dr. Bushnell.

I have lost my old petition, (which was brief) but will draft and enclose another—not in the words it ought to be, but in the substance. I want Mr. Lowell to furnish the words (and the ideas too,) if he will do it.

Say——Redpath *beseeches* me to lecture in Boston in November—telegraphs that Beecher's and Nast's withdrawal has put him in the tightest kind of a place. So I guess I'll do that old "Roughing It" lecture over again in November and repeat it 2 or 3 times in New York while I am at it.

Can I take a carriage after the lecture and go out and

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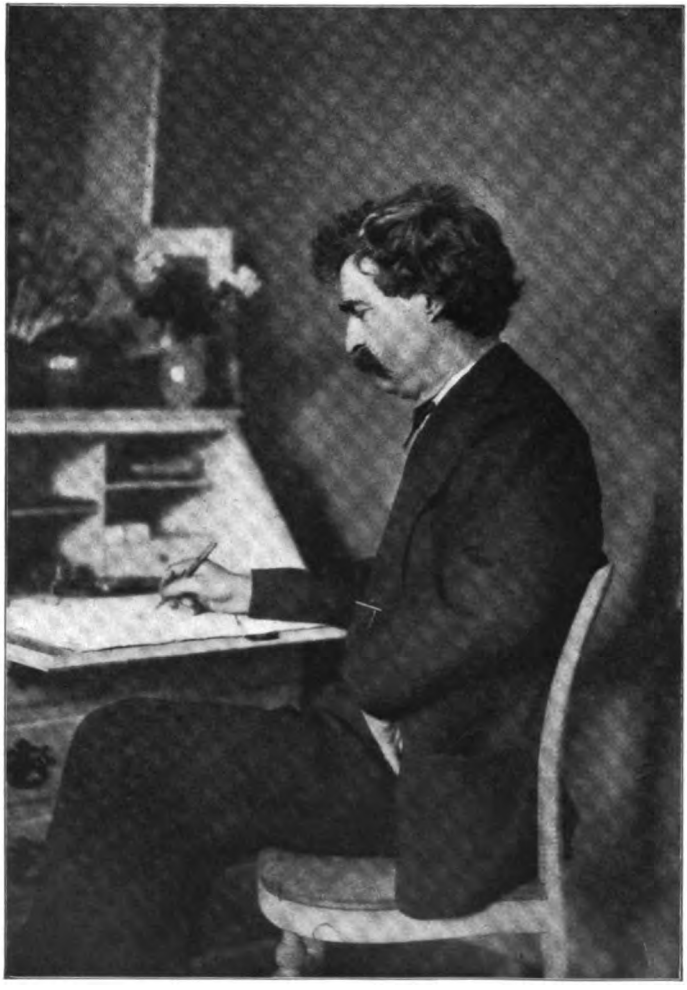

MARK TWAIN AT HARTFORD ABOUT 1875

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stay with you that night, provided you find at that distant time that it will not inconvenience you? Is Aldrich home yet?

With love to you all—

Yrs ever,

S. L. C.

Of course the petition never reached Congress. Holmes's comment that governments were not in the habit of setting themselves up as high moral examples, except for revenue, was shared by too many others. The petition was tabled, but Clemens never abandoned his purpose and lived to see most of his dream fulfilled. Meantime, Howells's notice of the *Sketches* appeared in the *Atlantic*, and brought grateful acknowledgment from the author.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Oct. 19, 1875.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—That is a perfectly superb notice. You can easily believe that nothing ever gratified me so much before. The newspaper praises bestowed upon the "Innocents Abroad" were large and generous, but somehow I hadn't *confidence* in the critical judgement of the parties who furnished them. *You* know how that is, yourself, from reading the newspaper notices of your own books. They gratify a body, but they always leave a small pang behind in the shape of a fear that the critic's good words could not safely be depended upon as *authority*. Yours is the recognized critical Court of Last Resort in this country; from its decision there is no appeal; and so, to have gained this decree of yours before I am forty years old, I regard as a thing to be right down proud of. Mrs. Clemens says, "Tell him *I* am just as grateful to him as I can be." (It sounds as if she were grateful to you for heroically trampling the truth under foot in order to praise me —but in reality it means that she is grateful to you for being bold enough to utter a truth which she fully be-

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lieves all competent people know, but which none has heretofore been brave enough to utter.) You see, the thing that gravels her is that I am so persistently glorified as a mere buffoon, as if that entirely covered my case—which she denies with venom.

The other day Mrs. Clemens was planning a visit to you, and so I am waiting with a pleasurable hope for the result of her deliberations. We are expecting visitors every day, now, from New York; and afterward some are to come from Elmira. I judge that we shall then be free to go Bostonward. I should be just delighted; because we could visit in comfort, since we shouldn't have to do any shopping—did it all in New York last week, and a tremendous pull it was too.

Mrs. C. said the other day, "We will go to Cambridge if we have to walk; for I don't believe we can ever get the Howellses to come here again until we have been there." I was gratified to see that there was one string, anyway, that could take her to Cambridge. But I will do her the justice to say that she is always wanting to go to Cambridge, independent of the selfish desire to get a visit out of you by it. I want her to get started, now, before children's diseases are fashionable again, because they always play such hob with visiting arrangements.

With love to you all

Yrs Ever

S. L. CLEMENS.

Mark Twain's trips to Boston were usually made alone. Women require more preparation to go visiting, and Mrs. Clemens and Mrs. Howells seem to have exchanged visits infrequently. For Mark Twain, perhaps, it was just as well that his wife did not always go with him; his absent-mindedness and boyish ingenuousness often led him into difficulties which Mrs. Clemens sometimes found embarrassing. In the foregoing letter they were planning a visit to Cambridge. In the one that follows they seem to have made it—with certain results, perhaps not altogether amusing at the moment.

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To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Oct. 4, '75.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—We had a royal good time at your house, and have had a royal good time ever since, talking about it, both privately and with the neighbors. Mrs. Clemens's bodily strength came up handsomely under that cheery respite from household and nursery cares. I do hope that Mrs. Howells's didn't go correspondingly down, under the added burden to *her* cares and responsibilities. Of course I didn't expect to get through without committing some crimes and hearing of them afterwards, so I have taken the inevitable lashings and been able to hum a tune while the punishment went on. I "caught it" for letting Mrs. Howells bother and bother about her coffee when it was "a good deal better than we get at home." I "caught it" for interrupting Mrs. C. at the last moment and losing her the opportunity to urge you not to forget to send her that MS when the printers are done with it. I "caught it" once more for personating that drunken Col. James. I "caught it" for mentioning that Mr. Longfellow's picture was slightly damaged; and when, after a lull in the storm, I confessed, shame-facedly, that I had privately suggested to you that we hadn't any *frames*, and that if you wouldn't mind hinting to Mr. Houghton, &c., &c., &c., the Madam was simply speechless for the space of a minute. Then she said:

"How *could* you, Youth! The idea of sending Mr. Howells, with his sensitive nature, upon such a repulsive er——"

"Oh, *Howells* won't mind it! You don't know Howells. Howells is a man who——" She was gone. But George was the first person she stumbled on in the hall, so she took it out of George. I was glad of that, because it saved the babies.

I've got another rattling good character for my novel! That great work is mulling itself into shape gradually.

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Mrs. Clemens sends love to Mrs. Howells—meantime she is diligently laying up material for a letter to her.

Yrs ever MARK.

The "George" of this letter was Mark Twain's colored butler, a valued and even beloved member of the household—a most picturesque character, who "one day came to wash windows," as Clemens used to say, "and remained eighteen years." The fiction of Mrs. Clemens's severity he always found amusing, because of its entire contrast with the reality of her gentle heart.

Clemens carried the *Tom Sawyer* MS. to Boston himself and placed it in Howells's hands. Howells had begged to be allowed to see the story, and Mrs. Clemens was especially anxious that he should do so. She had doubts as to certain portions of it, and had the fullest faith in Howells's opinion.

It was a gratifying one when it came. Howells wrote: "I finished reading *Tom Sawyer* a week ago, sitting up till one A.M. to get to the end, simply because it was impossible to leave off. It's altogether the best boy's story I ever read. It will be an immense success. But I think you ought to treat it explicitly *as* a boy's story. Grown-ups will enjoy it just as much if you do; and if you should put it forth as a study of boy character from the grown-up point of view, you give the wrong key to it. . . . The adventures are enchanting. I wish *I* had been on that island. The treasure-hunting, the loss in the cave—it's all exciting and splendid. I shouldn't think of publishing this story serially. Give me a hint when it's to be out, and I'll start the sheep to jumping in the right places"—meaning that he would have an advance review ready for publication in the *Atlantic*, which was a leader of criticism in America.

Mark Twain was writing a great deal at this time. Howells was always urging him to send something to the *Atlantic*, declaring a willingness to have his name appear every month in their pages, and Clemens was generally contributing some story or sketch. The "proof" referred to in the next letter was of one of these articles.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Nov. 23, '75.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Herewith is the proof. In spite of myself, how awkwardly I do jumble words together;

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and how often I do use three words where one would answer—a thing I am always trying to guard against. I shall become as slovenly a writer as Charles Francis Adams, if I don't look out. (That is said in jest; because of course I do not seriously fear getting so bad as that. I never shall drop so far toward his and Bret Harte's level as to catch myself saying "It must have been wiser to have believed that he might have accomplished it if he could have felt that he would have been supported by those who should have &c. &c. &c.) The reference to Bret Harte reminds me that I often accuse him of being a deliberate imitator of Dickens; and this in turn reminds me that I have charged unconscious plagiarism upon Charley Warner; and *this* in turn reminds me that I have been delighting my soul for two weeks over a bran new and ingenious way of beginning a novel—and behold, all at once it flashes upon me that *Charley Warner* originated the idea 3 years ago and told me about it! Aha! So much for self-righteousness! I am well repaid. Here are 108 pages of MS, new and clean, lying disgraced in the waste paper basket, and I am beginning the novel over again in an unstolen way. I would not wonder if I am the worst literary thief in the world, without knowing it.

It is glorious news that you like Tom Sawyer so well. I mean to see to it that your review of it shall have plenty of time to appear before the other notices. Mrs. Clemens decides with you that the book should issue as a book for boys, pure and simple—and so do I. It is surely the correct idea. As to that last chapter, I think of just leaving it off and adding nothing in its place. Something told me that the book was done when I got to that point—and so the strong temptation to put Huck's life at the Widow's into detail, instead of generalizing it in a paragraph was resisted. Just send Sawyer to me by express—I enclose money for it. If it should get lost it will be no great matter.

Company interfered last night, and so "Private Theatricals" goes over till this evening, to be read aloud.

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Mrs. Clemens is mad, but the story will take *that* all out. This is going to be a splendid winter night for fireside reading, anyway.

I am almost at a dead stand-still with my new story, on account of the misery of having to do it all over again.

We-all send love to you-all.

Yrs ever

MARK.

The "story" referred to may have been any one of several begun by him at this time. His head was full of ideas for literature of every sort. Many of his beginnings came to nothing, for the reason that he started wrong, or with no definitely formed plan. Others of his literary enterprises were condemned by his wife for their grotesqueness or for the offense they might give in one way or another, however worthy the intention behind them. Once he wrote a burlesque on family history—"The Autobiography of a Damned Fool." "Livy wouldn't have it," he said later, "so I gave it up." The world is indebted to Mark Twain's wife for the check she put upon his fantastic or violent impulses. She was his public, his best public—clear-headed and wise. That he realized this, and was willing to yield, was by no means the least of his good fortunes. We may believe that he did not always yield easily, and perhaps sometimes only out of love for her. In the letter which he wrote her on her thirtieth birthday we realize something of what she had come to mean in his life.

To Mrs. Clemens on her Thirtieth Birthday:

HARTFORD, *November 27, 1875.*

Livy darling, six years have gone by since I made my first great success in life and won you, and thirty years have passed since Providence made preparation for that happy success by sending you into the world. Every day we live together adds to the security of my confidence that we can never any more wish to be separated than that we can ever imagine a regret that we were ever joined. You are dearer to me to-day, my child, than you

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were upon the last anniversary of this birth-day; you were dearer then than you were a year before—you have grown more and more dear from the first of those anniversaries, and I do not doubt that this precious progression will continue on to the end.

Let us look forward to the coming anniversaries, with their age and their gray hairs without fear and without depression, trusting and believing that the love we bear each other will be sufficient to make them blessed.

So, with abounding affection for you and our babies, I hail this day that brings you the matronly grace and dignity of three decades!

Always Yours

S. L. C.

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XVI

LETTERS, 1876, CHIEFLY TO W. D. HOWELLS. LITERATURE AND POLITICS. PLANNING A PLAY WITH BRET HARTE

THE Monday Evening Club of Hartford was an association of most of the literary talent of that city, and it included a number of very distinguished members. The writers, the editors, the lawyers, and the ministers of the gospel who composed it were more often than not men of national or international distinction. There was but one paper at each meeting, and it was likely to be a paper that would later find its way into some magazine.

Naturally Mark Twain was one of its favorite members, and his contributions never failed to arouse interest and discussion. A "Mark Twain night" brought out every member. In the next letter we find the first mention of one of his most memorable contributions—a story of one of life's moral aspects. The tale, now included in his collected works, is, for some reason, little read to-day; yet the curious allegory, so vivid in its seeming reality, is well worth consideration.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Jan. 11, '76.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Indeed we haven't forgotten the Howellses, nor scored up a grudge of any kind against them; but the fact is I was under the doctor's hands for four weeks on a stretch and have been disabled from working for a week or so beside. I thought I was well, about ten days ago, so I sent for a short-hand writer and dictated answers to a bushel or so of letters that had been accumulating during my illness. Getting everything shipshape and cleared up, I went to work next day upon an

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Atlantic article, which ought to be worth $20 per page (which is the price they usually pay for my work, I believe) for although it is only 70 pages MS (less than two days work, counting by bulk,) I have spent 3 more days trimming, altering and working at it. I shall put in one more day's polishing on it, and then read it before our Club, which is to meet at our house Monday evening, the 24th inst. I think it will bring out considerable discussion among the gentlemen of the Club—though the title of the article will not give them much notion of what is to follow,—this title being "The *Facts* Concerning the Recent Carnival of Crime in Connecticut"—which reminds me that today's Tribune says there will be a startling article in the *current* Atlantic, in which a being which is *tangible but invisible* will figure—exactly the case with the sketch of mine which I am talking about! However, mine can lie unpublished a year or two as well as not—though I wish that contributor of yours had not interfered with his coincidence of heroes.

But what I am coming at, is this: won't you and Mrs. Howells come down Saturday the 22nd and remain to the Club on Monday night? We always have a rattling good time at the Club and we do want you to come, ever so much. Will you? Now say you will. Mrs. Clemens and I are persuading ourselves that you twain *will* come.

My volume of sketches is doing very well, considering the times; received my quarterly statement today from Bliss, by which I perceive that 20,000 copies have been sold—or rather, 20,000 had been sold 3 weeks ago; a lot more, by this time, no doubt.

I am on the sick list again—and was, day before yesterday—but on the whole I am getting along.

Yrs ever

MARK

Howells wrote that he could not come down to the club meeting, adding that sickness was "quite out of character" for Mark Twain, and hardly fair on a man who had made so many other

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people feel well. He closed by urging that Bliss "hurry out" *Tom Sawyer*. "That boy is going to make a prodigious hit." Clemens answered:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston.

HARTFORD, *Jan. 18, '76.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Thanks, and ever so many, for the good opinion of Tom Sawyer. Williams has made about 300 rattling pictures for it—some of them very dainty. Poor devil, what a genius he has and how he does murder it with rum. He takes a book of mine, and without suggestion from anybody builds no end of pictures just from his reading of it.

There was never a man in the world so grateful to another as I was to you day before yesterday, when I sat down (in still rather wretched health) to set myself to the dreary and hateful task of making final revision of Tom Sawyer, and discovered, upon opening the package of MS that your pencil marks were scattered all along. This was splendid, and swept away all labor. Instead of *reading* the MS, I simply hunted out the pencil marks and made the emendations which they suggested. I reduced the boy battle to a curt paragraph; I finally concluded to cut the Sunday school speech down to the first two sentences, leaving no suggestion of satire, since the book is to be for boys and girls; I tamed the various obscenities until I judged that they no longer carried offense. So, at a single sitting I began and finished a revision which I had supposed would occupy 3 or 4 days and leave me mentally and physically fagged out at the end. I was careful not to inflict the MS upon you until I had thoroughly and painstakingly revised it. Therefore, the only faults left were those that would discover themselves to others, not me—and these you had pointed out.

There was one expression which perhaps you overlooked. When Huck is complaining to Tom of the rigorous system in vogue at the widow's, he says the servants harass him

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with all manner of compulsory decencies, and he winds up by saying: "and they comb me all to hell." (No exclamation point.) Long ago, when I read that to Mrs. Clemens, she made no comment; another time I created occasion to read that chapter to her aunt and her mother (both sensitive and loyal subjects of the kingdom of heaven, so to speak) and *they* let it pass. I was glad, for it was the most natural remark in the world for that boy to make (and he had been allowed few privileges of speech in the book;) when I saw that you, too, had let it go without protest, I was glad, and afraid, too—afraid you hadn't observed it. Did you? And did you question the propriety of it? Since the book is now professedly and confessedly a boy's and girl's book, that darn word bothers me some, nights, but it never did until I had ceased to regard the volume as being for adults.

Don't bother to answer *now*, (for you've writing enough to do without allowing me to add to the burden,) but tell me when you see me again!

Which we do hope will be next Saturday or Sunday or Monday. Couldn't you come now and mull over the alterations which you are going to make in your MS, and make them after you go back? Wouldn't it assist the work if you dropped out of harness and routine for a day or two and have that sort of revivification which comes of a holiday—forgetfulness of the work-shop? I can always work after I've been to your house; and if you will come to mine, now, and hear the club toot their various horns over the exasperating metaphysical question which I mean to lay before them in the disguise of a literary extravaganza, it would just brace you up like a cordial.

(I feel sort of mean trying to persuade a man to put down a critical piece of work at a critical time, but yet I am honest in thinking it would not hurt the work nor impair your interest in it to come under the circumstances.) Mrs. Clemens says, "Maybe the Howellses could come *Monday* if they cannot come Saturday; ask

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them; it is worth trying." Well, how's that? *Could* you? It would be splendid if you could. Drop me a postal card—I should have a twinge of conscience if I forced you to write a letter, (I am honest about that,)—and if you find you can't make out to come, tell me that you bodies will come the *next* Saturday if the thing is possible, and stay over Sunday.

Yrs ever

MARK.

Howells, however, did not come to the club meeting, but promised to come soon when they could have a quiet time to themselves together. As to Huck's language, he declared:

"I'd have that swearing out in an instant. I suppose I didn't notice it because the locution was so familiar to my Western sense, and so exactly the thing that Huck would say." Clemens changed the phrase to, "They comb me all to thunder," and so it stands to-day.

The "Carnival of Crime," having served its purpose at the club, found quick acceptance by Howells for the *Atlantic*. He was so pleased with it, in fact, that somewhat later he wrote, urging that its author allow it to be printed in a dainty book, by Osgood, who made a specialty of fine publishing. Meantime Howells had written his *Atlantic* notice of *Tom Sawyer*, and now inclosed Clemens a proof of it. We may judge from the reply that it was satisfactory.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Apl. 3, '76.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—It is a splendid notice and will embolden weak-kneed journalistic admirers to speak out, and will modify or shut up the unfriendly. To "fear God and dread the Sunday school" exactly described that old feeling which I used to have, but I couldn't have formulated it. I want to enclose one of the illustrations in this letter, if I do not forget it. Of course the book is to be elaborately illustrated, and I think that many of the

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pictures are considerably above the American average, in conception if not in execution.

I do not re-enclose your review to you, for you have evidently read and corrected it, and so I judge you do not need it. About two days after the Atlantic issues I mean to begin to send books to principal journals and magazines.

I read the "Carnival of Crime" proof in New York when worn and witless and so left some things unamended which I might possibly have altered had I been at home. For instance, "I shall always address you in your own S-n-i-v-e-l-i-n-g d-r-a-w-l, baby." I saw that you objected to something there, but I did not understand what! Was it that it was too personal? Should the language be altered?—or the hyphens taken out? Won't you please fix it the way it ought to be, altering the language as you choose, only making it bitter and contemptuous?

"Deuced" was not strong enough; so I met you halfway with "devilish."

Mrs. Clemens has returned from New York with dreadful sore throat, and bones racked with rheumatism. She keeps her bed. "Aloha nui!" as the Kanakas say.

MARK.

Henry Irving once said to Mark Twain: "You made a mistake by not adopting the stage as a profession. You would have made even a greater actor than a writer."

Mark Twain would have made an actor, certainly, but not a very tractable one. His appearance in Hartford in "The Loan of a Lover" was a distinguished event, and his success complete, though he made so many extemporaneous improvements on the lines of thick-headed Peter Spuyk, that he kept the other actors guessing as to their cues, and nearly broke up the performance. It was, of course, an amateur benefit, though Augustin Daly promptly wrote, offering to put it on for a long run.

The "skeleton novelette" mentioned in the next letter refers to a plan concocted by Howells and Clemens, by which each of twelve authors was to write a story, using the same plot, "blindfolded" as to what the others had written. It was a regular "Mark Twain" notion, and it is hard to-day to imagine Howells's con-

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tinued enthusiasm in it. Neither he nor Clemens gave up the idea for a long time. It appears in their letters again and again, though perhaps it was just as well for literature that it was never carried out.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Apl. 22, 1876.

My dear Howells,—You'll see per enclosed slip that I appear for the first time on the stage next Wednesday. You and Mrs. H. come down and you shall skip in free.

I wrote my skeleton novelette yesterday and today. It will make a little under 12 pages.

Please tell Aldrich I've got a photographer engaged, and tri-weekly issue is about to begin. Show him the canvassing specimens and beseech him to subscribe.

Ever yours,

S. L. C.

In his next letter Mark Twain explains why *Tom Sawyer* is not to appear as soon as planned. The reference to "The Literary Nightmare" refers to the "Punch, Conductor, Punch with Care" sketch, which had recently appeared in the *Atlantic*. Many other versifiers had had their turn at horse-car poetry, and now a publisher was anxious to collect it in a book, provided he could use the *Atlantic* sketch. Clemens does not tell us here the nature of Carlton's insult, forgiveness of which he was not yet qualified to grant, but there are at least two stories about it, or two halves of the same incident, as related afterward by Clemens and Carlton. Clemens said that when he took the *Jumping Frog* book to Carlton, in 1867, the latter, pointing to his stock, said, rather scornfully: "Books? I don't *want* your book; my shelves are *full* of books now," though the reader may remember that it was Carlton himself who had given the frog story to the *Saturday Press* and had seen it become famous. Carlton's half of the story was that he did not accept Mark Twain's book because the author looked so disreputable. Long afterward, when the two men met in Europe, the publisher said to the now rich and famous author: "Mr. Clemens, my one claim on immortality is that I declined your first book."

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MARK TWAIN'S LETTERS

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Apl. 25, 1876.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Thanks for giving me the place of honor.

Bliss made a failure in the matter of getting Tom Sawyer ready on time—the engravers assisting, as usual. I went down to see how much of a delay there was going to be, and found that the man had not even put a canvasser on, or issued an advertisement yet—in fact, that the electrotypes would not all be done for a month! But of course the main fact was that no canvassing had been done—because a subscription harvest is *before* publication, (not *after*, when people have discovered how bad one's book is.)

Well, yesterday I put in the Courant an editorial paragraph stating that Tom Sawyer is "ready to issue, but publication is put off in order to secure English copyright by simultaneous publication there and here. The English edition is unavoidably delayed."

You see, part of that is true. Very well. When I observed that my "Sketches" had dropped from a sale of 6 or 7000 a month down to 1200 a month, I said "*this* ain't no time to be publishing books; therefore, let Tom lie still till Autumn, Mr. Bliss, and make a holiday book of him to beguile the young people withal."

I shall print items occasionally, still further delaying Tom, till I ease him down to Autumn without shock to the waiting world.

As to that "Literary Nightmare" proposition. I'm obliged to withhold consent, for what seems a good reason —to wit: A single page of horse-car poetry is all that the average reader can stand, without nausea; now, to stack together *all* of it that has been written, and then add it to my article would be to enrage and disgust each and every reader and win the deathless enmity of the lot.

Even if that reason were insufficient, there would still be a sufficient reason left, in the fact that Mr. Carlton

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seems to be the publisher of the magazine in which it is proposed to publish this horse-car matter. Carlton insulted me in Feb. 1867, and so when the day arrives that sees me doing him a civility I shall feel that I am ready for Paradise, since my list of possible and impossible forgivenesses will then be complete.

Mrs. Clemens says my version of the blindfold novelette "A Murder and A Marriage" is "good." Pretty strong language—for her.

The Fieldses are coming down to the play tomorrow, and they promise to get you and Mrs. Howells to come too, but I hope you'll do nothing of the kind if it will inconvenience you, for I'm not going to play either strikingly bad enough or well enough to make the journey pay you.

My wife and I think of going to Boston May 7th to see Anna Dickinson's debut on the 8th. If I find we can go, I'll try to get a stage box and then you and Mrs. Howells must come to Parker's and go with us to the crucifixion.

(Is that spelt right?—somehow it doesn't *look* right.)

With our very kindest regards to the whole family.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

The mention of Anna Dickinson, at the end of this letter, recalls a prominent reformer and lecturer of the Civil War period. She had begun her crusades against temperance and slavery in 1857, when she was but fifteen years old, when her success as a speaker had been immediate and extraordinary. Now, in this later period, at the age of thirty-four, she aspired to the stage—unfortunately for her, as her gifts lay elsewhere. Clemens and Howells knew Miss Dickinson, and were anxious for the success which they hardly dared hope for. Clemens arranged a box party.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

May 4, '76.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I shall reach Boston on Monday the 8th, either at 4:30 p.m. or 6 p.m. (Which is best?)

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and go straight to Parker's. If you and Mrs. Howells cannot be there by half past 4, I'll not plan to arrive till the later train-time (6,) because I don't want to be there alone—even a minute. Still, Joe Twichell will doubtless go with me (forgot that,)—he is going to try hard to. Mrs. Clemens has given up going, because Susy is just recovering from about the savagest assault of diphtheria a child ever *did* recover from, and therefore will not be entirely her healthy self again by the 8th.

Would you and Mrs. Howells like to invite Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich? I have a large proscenium box—plenty of room. Use your own pleasure about it—I mainly (that is honest,) suggest it because I am seeking to make matters pleasant for you and Mrs. Howells. I invited Twichell because I thought I knew you'd like that. I want you to fix it so that you and the Madam can remain in Boston all night; for I leave next day and we can't have a *talk*, otherwise. I am going to get two rooms and a parlor; and would like to know what you decide about the Aldriches, so as .to know whether to apply for an additional bedroom or not.

Don't dine that evening, for I shall arrive dinnerless and need your help.

I'll bring my Blindfold Novelette, but shan't exhibit it unless you exhibit yours. You would simply go to work and write a novelette that would make mine sick. Because you would know all about where my weak points lay. No, Sir, I'm one of these old wary birds!

Don't bother to write a letter—3 lines on a postal card is all that I can permit from a busy man.

Yrs ever

MARK.

P. S. Good! You'll not have to feel any call to mention that debut in the Atlantic—they've made me pay the grand cash for my box!—a thing which most managers would be too worldly-wise to do, with journalistic folks. But I'm most honestly glad, for I'd rather pay three

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prices, any time, than to have my tongue half paralyzed with a dead-head ticket.

Hang that Anna Dickinson, a body can never depend upon her debuts! She has made five or six false starts already. If she fails to debut this time, I will never bet on her again.

In his book, *My Mark Twain*, Howells refers to the "tragedy" of Miss Dickinson's appearance. She was the author of numerous plays, some of which were successful, but her career as an actress was never brilliant.

At Elmira that summer the Clemenses heard from their good friend Doctor Brown, of Edinburgh, and sent eager replies.

To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:

ELMIRA, NEW YORK, U. S. *June 22, 1876.*

DEAR FRIEND THE DOCTOR,—It was a perfect delight to see the well-known handwriting again! But we so grieve to know that you are feeling miserable. It must not last—it *cannot* last. The regal summer is come and it will smile you into high good cheer; it will charm away your pains, it will banish your distresses. I wish you were here, to spend the summer with us. We are perched on a hill-top that overlooks a little world of green valleys, shining rivers, sumptuous forests and billowy uplands veiled in the haze of distance. We have no neighbors. It is the quietest of all quiet places, and we are hermits that eschew caves and live in the sun. Doctor, if you'd only come!

I will carry your letter to Mrs. C. now, and there will be a glad woman, I tell you! And she shall find one of those pictures to put in this for Mrs. Barclay; and if there isn't one here we'll send right away to Hartford and get one. Come over, Doctor John, and bring the Barclays, the Nicolsons and the Browns, one and all!

Affectionately,

SAML. L. CLEMENS.

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From May until August no letters appear to have passed between Clemens and Howells; the latter finally wrote, complaining of the lack of news. He was in the midst of campaign activities, he said, writing a life of Hayes, and gaily added: "You know I wrote the life of Lincoln, which elected him." He further reported a comedy he had completed, and gave Clemens a general stirring up as to his own work.

Mark Twain, in his hillside study, was busy enough. Summer was his time for work, and he had tried his hand in various directions. His mention of Huck Finn in his reply to Howells is interesting, in that it shows the measure of his enthusiasm, or lack of it, as a gauge of his ultimate achievement.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *Aug. 9, 1876.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I was just about to write you when your letter came—and not one of those obscene postal cards, either, but reverently, upon paper.

I shall read that biography, though the letter of acceptance was amply sufficient to corral my vote without any further knowledge of the man. Which reminds me that a campaign club in Jersey City wrote a few days ago and invited me to be present at the raising of a Tilden and Hendricks flag there, and to take the stand and give them some "counsel." Well, I could not go, but gave them counsel and advice by letter, and in the kindliest terms as to the raising of the flag—advised them "not to raise it."

Get your book out quick, for this is a momentous time. If Tilden is elected I think the entire country will go pretty straight to—Mrs. Howells's bad place.

I am infringing on your patent—I started a record of our children's sayings, last night. Which reminds me that last week I sent down and got Susie a vast pair of shoes of a most villainous pattern, for I discovered that her feet were being twisted and cramped out of shape by a smaller and prettier article. She did not complain, but looked degraded and injured. At night her mamma gave her

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the usual admonition when she was about to say her prayers—to wit:

"Now, Susie—think about God."

"Mamma, I can't, with those shoes."

The farm is perfectly delightful this season. It is as quiet and peaceful as a South Sea Island. Some of the sunsets which we have witnessed from this commanding eminence were marvelous. One evening a rainbow spanned an entire range of hills with its mighty arch, and from a black hub resting upon the hill-top in the exact centre, *black* rays diverged upward in perfect regularity to the rainbow's arch and created a very strongly defined and altogether the most majestic, magnificent and startling half-sunk wagon wheel you can imagine. After that, a world of tumbling and prodigious clouds came drifting up out of the West and took to themselves a wonderfully rich and brilliant *green* color—the decided green of new spring foliage. Close by them we saw the intense blue of the skies, through rents in the cloud-rack, and away off in another quarter were drifting clouds of a delicate pink color. In one place hung a pall of dense black clouds, like compacted pitch-smoke. And the stupendous wagon wheel was still in the supremacy of its unspeakable grandeur. So you see, the colors present in the sky at once and the same time were blue, green, pink, black, and the vari-colored splendors of the rainbow. All strong and decided colors, too. I don't know whether this weird and astounding spectacle most suggested heaven, or hell. The wonder, with its constant, stately, and always surprising changes, lasted upwards of two hours, and we all stood on the top of the hill by my study till the final miracle was complete and the greatest day ended that we ever saw.

Our farmer, who is a grave man, watched that spectacle to the end, and then observed that it was "dam funny."

The double-barreled novel lies torpid. I found I could not go on with it. The chapters I had written were still too new and familiar to me. I may take it up next winter,

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but cannot tell yet; I waited and waited to see if my interest in it would not revive, but gave it up a month ago and began another boys' book—more to be at work than anything else. I have written 400 pages on it—therefore it is very nearly half done. It is Huck Finn's Autobiography. I like it only tolerably well, as far as I have got, and may possibly pigeonhole or burn the MS when it is done.

So the comedy is done, and with a "fair degree of satisfaction." That rejoices me, and makes me mad, too—for I can't plan a comedy, and what have you done that God should be so good to you? I have racked myself baldheaded trying to plan a comedy harness for some promising characters of mine to work in, and had to give it up. It is a noble lot of blooded stock and worth no end of money, but they must stand in the stable and be profitless. I want to be present when the comedy is produced and help enjoy the success.

Warner's book is mighty readable, I think.

Love to yez.

Yrs ever

MARK

Howells promptly wrote again, urging him to enter the campaign for Hayes. "There is not another man in this country," he said, "who could help him so much as you." The "farce" which Clemens refers to in his reply, was "The Parlor Car," which seems to have been about the first venture of Howells in that field.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *August 23, 1876.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I am glad you think I could do Hayes any good, for I have been wanting to write a letter or make a speech to that end. I'll be careful not to do either, however, until the opportunity comes in a natural, justifiable and unlugged way; and shall not then do any-

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thing unless I've got it all digested and worded just right. In which case I *might* do some good—in any other I should do harm. When a humorist ventures upon the grave concerns of life he must do his job better than another man or he works harm to his cause.

The farce is wonderfully bright and delicious, and *must* make a hit. You read it to me, and it was mighty good; I read it last night and it was better; I read it aloud to the household this morning and it was better than ever. So it would be worth going a long way to see it well played; for without any question an actor of genius always adds a subtle something to any man's work that none but the writer knew was there before. Even if *he* knew it. I have heard of readers convulsing audiences with my "Aurelia's Unfortunate Young Man." If there is anything really funny in the piece, the author is not aware of it.

All right—advertise me for the new volume. I send you herewith a sketch which will make 3½ pages of the Atlantic. If you like it and accept it, you should get it into the *December* No. because I shall read it in public in Boston the 13th and 14th of Nov. If it went in a month earlier it would be too old for me to read except as old matter; and if it went in a month later it would be too old for the Atlantic—do you see? And if you wish to use it, will you set it up *now*, and send me three proofs? —one to correct for Atlantic, one to send to Temple Bar (shall I tell them to use it not earlier than their November No?) and one to use in practising for my Boston readings.

We must get up a less elaborate and a much better skeleton-plan for the Blindfold Novels and make a success of that idea. David Gray spent Sunday here and said we could but little comprehend what a rattling stir that thing would make in the country. He thought it would make a mighty strike. So do I. But with only 8 pages to tell the tale in, the plot must be less elaborate, doubtless. What do you think?

When we exchange visits I'll show you an unfinished

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sketch of Elizabeth's time which shook David Gray's system up pretty exhaustively.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

The MS. sketch mentioned in the foregoing letter was "The Canvasser's Tale," later included in the volume, *Tom Sawyer Abroad, and Other Stories*. It is far from being Mark Twain's best work, but was accepted and printed in the *Atlantic*. David Gray was an able journalist and editor whom Mark Twain had known in Buffalo.

The "sketch of Elizabeth's time" is a brilliant piece of writing—an imaginary record of conversation and court manners in the good old days of free speech and performance, phrased in the language of the period. Gray, John Hay, Twichell, and others who had a chance to see it thought highly of it, and Hay had it set in type and a few proofs taken for private circulation. Some years afterward a West Point officer had a special font of antique type made for it, and printed a hundred copies. But the present-day reader would hardly be willing to include "Fireside Conversation in the Time of Queen Elizabeth" in Mark Twain's collected works.

Clemens was a strong Republican in those days, as his letters of this period show. His mention of the "caves" in the next is another reference to "The Canvasser's Tale."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Sept. 14, 1876.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Yes, the collection of caves was the origin of it. I changed it to echoes because these being invisible and intangible, constituted a still more absurd species of property, and yet a man could really own an echo, and sell it, too, for a high figure—such an echo as that at the Villa Siminetti, two miles from Milan, for instance. My first purpose was to have the man make a collection of caves and afterwards of echoes, but perceived that the element of absurdity and impracticability was so nearly identical as to amount to a repetition of an idea. . . .

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I will not, and do not, believe that there is a possibility of Hayes's defeat, but I want the victory to be sweeping. . . .

It seems odd to find myself interested in an election. I never was before. And I can't seem to get over my repugnance to reading or thinking about politics, yet. But in truth I care little about any party's politics—the man behind it is the important thing.

You may well know that Mrs. Clemens liked the Parlor Car—enjoyed it ever so much, and was indignant at you all through, and kept exploding into rages at you for pretending that such a woman ever existed—closing each and every explosion with "But it is just what such a woman would do."—"It is just what such a woman would say." They all voted the Parlor Car perfection—except me. I said they wouldn't have been allowed to court and quarrel there so long, uninterrupted; but at each critical moment the odious train-boy would come in and pile foul literature all over them four or five inches deep, and the lover would turn his head aside and curse—and presently that train-boy would be back again (as on all those Western roads) to take up the literature and leave prize candy.

Of course the thing is perfect, in the magazine, without the train-boy; but I was thinking of the stage and the groundlings. If the dainty touches went over their heads, the train-boy and other possible interruptions would fetch them every time. Would it mar the flow of the thing too much to insert that devil? I thought it over a couple of hours and concluded it wouldn't, and that he ought to be in for the sake of the groundlings (and to get new copyright on the piece.)

And it seemed to me that now that the fourth act is so successfully written, why not go ahead and write the 3 preceding acts? And then after it is finished, let me put into it a low-comedy character (the girl's or the lover's father or uncle) and gobble a big pecuniary interest in your work for myself. Do not let this generous prop-

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osition disturb your rest—but *do* write the other 3 acts, and then it will be valuable to managers. And don't go and sell it to anybody, like Harte, but keep it for yourself.

Harte's play can be doctored till it will be entirely acceptable and then it will clear a great sum every year. I am out of all patience with Harte for selling it. The play entertained me hugely, even in its present crude state.

Love to you all.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

Following the Sellers success, Clemens had made many attempts at dramatic writing. Such undertakings had uniformly failed, but he had always been willing to try again. In the next letter we get the beginning of what proved his first and last direct literary association, that is to say, collaboration, with Bret Harte. Clemens had great admiration for Harte's ability and believed that between them they could turn out a successful play. Whether or not this belief was justified will appear later.

Howells's biography of Hayes, meanwhile, had not gone well. He reported that only two thousand copies had been sold in what was now the height of the campaign. "There's success for you," he said; "it makes me despair of the Republic." Clemens, on his part, had made a speech for Hayes that Howells declared had put civil-service reform in a nutshell; he added: "You are the only Republican orator, quoted without distinction of party by all the newspapers."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Oct. 11, 1876.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—This is a secret, to be known to nobody but you (of course I comprehend that Mrs. Howells is part of you) that Bret Harte came up here the other day and asked me to help him write a play and divide the swag, and I agreed. I am to put in Scotty Briggs (See Buck Fanshaw's Funeral, in "Roughing It.")

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and he is to put in a Chinaman (a wonderfully funny creature, as Bret presents him—for 5 minutes—in his Sandy Bar play.) This Chinaman is to be *the* character of the play, and both of us will work on him and develop him. Bret is to draw a plot, and I am to do the same; we shall use the best of the two, or gouge from both and build a third. My plot is built—finished it yesterday—six days' work, 8 or 9 hours a day, and has nearly killed me.

Now the favor I ask of you is that you will have the words "Ah Sin, a Drama," printed in the middle of a note-paper page and send the same to me, with Bill. We don't want anybody to know that we are building this play. I can't get this title page printed here without having to lie so much that the thought of it is disagreeable to one reared as I have been. And yet the *title* of the play must be *printed*—the rest of the application for copyright is allowable in penmanship.

We have got the very best gang of servants in America, now. When George first came he was one of the most religious of men. He had but one fault—young George Washington's. But I have trained him; and now it fairly breaks Mrs. Clemens's heart to hear George stand at that front door and lie to the unwelcome visitor. But your time is valuable; I must not dwell upon these things. . . .

I'll ask Warner and Harte if they'll do Blindfold Novelettes. Some time I'll simplify that plot. All it needs is that the hanging and the marriage shall not be appointed for the same day. I got over that difficulty, but it required too much MS to reconcile the thing—so the movement of the story was clogged.

I came near agreeing to make political speeches with our candidate for Governor the 16th and 23 inst., but I had to give up the idea, for Harte and I will be here at work then.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

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MARK TWAIN'S LETTERS

Mark Twain was writing few letters these days to any one but Howells, yet in November he sent one to an old friend of his youth, Burrough, the literary chair-maker who had roomed with him in the days when he had been setting type for the St. Louis *Evening News*.

To Mr. Burrough, of St. Louis:

HARTFORD, *Nov. 1 '76.*

MY DEAR BURROUGH,—As you describe me I can picture myself as I was 22 years ago. The portrait is correct. You think I have grown some; upon my word there was room for it. You have described a callow fool, a self-sufficient ass, a mere human tumble-bug . . . imagining that he is re-modeling the world and is entirely capable of doing it right. Ignorance, intolerance, egotism, self-assertion, opaque perception, dense and pitiful chuckle-headedness—and an almost pathetic unconsciousness of it all. That is what I was at 19 and 20; and that is what the average Southerner is at 60 today. Northerners, too, of a certain grade. It is of children like this that voters are made. And such is the primal source of our government! A man hardly knows whether to swear or cry over it.

I think I comprehend the position there—perfect freedom to vote just as you choose, provided you choose to vote as *other* people think—social ostracism, otherwise. The same thing exists here, among the Irish. An Irish Republican is a pariah among his people. Yet that race find fault with the same spirit in Know-Nothingism.

Fortunately a good deal of experience of men enabled me to choose my residence wisely. I live in the freest corner of the country. There are no social disabilities between me and my Democratic personal friends. We break the bread and eat the salt of hospitality freely together and never dream of such a thing as offering impertinent interference in each other's political opinions.

Don't you ever come to New York again and not run up here to see me. I suppose we were away for the summer

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when you were East; but no matter, you could have telegraphed and found out. We were at Elmira N. Y. and right on your road, and could have given you a good time if you had allowed us the chance.

Yes, Will Bowen and I have exchanged letters now and then for several years, but I suspect that I made him mad with my last—shortly after you saw him in St. Louis, I judge. There is one thing which I can't stand and *won't* stand, from many people. That is sham sentimentality—the kind a school-girl puts into her graduating composition; the sort that makes up the Original Poetry column of a country newspaper; the rot that deals in the "happy days of yore," the "sweet yet melancholy past," with its "blighted hopes" and its "vanished dreams"—and all that sort of drivel. Will's were always of this stamp. I stood it years. When I get a letter like that from a grown man and he a widower with a family, it gives me the stomach ache. And I just told Will Bowen so, last summer. I told him to stop being 16 at 40; told him to stop drooling about the sweet yet melancholy past, and take a pill. I said there was but one solitary thing about the past worth remembering, and that was the fact that it *is* the past—can't be restored. Well, I exaggerated some of these truths a little—but only a little—but my idea was to kill his sham sentimentality once and forever, and so make a good fellow of him again. I went to the unheard-of trouble of re-writing the letter and saying the same harsh things softly, so as to sugar-coat the anguish and make it a little more endurable and I asked him to write and thank me honestly for doing him the best and kindliest favor that any friend ever *had* done him—but he hasn't done it yet. Maybe he will, sometime. I am grateful to God that I got that letter off before he was married (I get that news from you) else he would just have slobbered all over me and drowned me when that event happened.

I enclose photograph for the young ladies. I will remark that I do not wear seal-skin for grandeur, but because I

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found, when I used to lecture in the winter, that nothing else was able to keep a man warm sometimes, in these high latitudes. I wish you had sent pictures of yourself and family—I'll trade picture for picture with you, straight through, if you are commercially inclined.

Your old friend,

SAML L. CLEMENS.

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XVII

LETTERS, 1877. TO BERMUDA WITH TWICHELL. PROPOSITION TO TH. NAST. THE WHITTIER DINNER

MARK TWAIN must have been too busy to write letters that winter. Those that have survived are few and unimportant. As a matter of fact, he was writing the play, "Ah Sin," with Bret Harte, and getting it ready for production. Harte was a guest in the Clemens home while the play was being written, and not always a pleasant one. He was full of requirements, critical as to the *ménage*, to the point of sarcasm. The long friendship between Clemens and Harte weakened under the strain of collaboration and intimate daily intercourse, never to renew its old fiber. It was an unhappy outcome of an enterprise which in itself was to prove of little profit. The play, "Ah Sin," had many good features, and with Charles T. Parsloe in an amusing Chinese part might have been made a success, if the two authors could have harmoniously undertaken the needed repairs. It opened in Washington in May, and a letter from Parsloe, written at the moment, gives a hint of the situation.

From Charles T. Parsloe to S. L. Clemens:

WASHINGTON, D. C. *May 11th, 1877.*

MR. CLEMENS,—I forgot whether I acknowledged receipt of check by telegram. Harte has been here since Monday last and done little or nothing yet, but promises to have something fixed by tomorrow morning. We have been making some improvements among ourselves. The last act is weak at the end, and I do hope Mr. Harte will have something for a good finish to the piece. The other acts I think are all right, now.

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Hope you have entirely recovered. I am not very well myself, the excitement of a first night is bad enough, but to have the annoyance with Harte that I have is too much for a beginner. I ain't used to it. The houses have been picking up since Tuesday Mr. Ford has worked well and hard for us.

Yours in haste,
CHAS. THOS. PARSLOE.

The play drew some good houses in Washington, but it could not hold them for a run. Never mind what was the matter with it; perhaps a very small change at the right point would have turned it into a fine success. We have seen in a former letter the obligation which Mark Twain confessed to Harte—a debt he had tried in many ways to repay—obtaining for him a liberal book contract with Bliss; advancing him frequent and large sums of money which Harte could not, or did not, repay; seeking to advance his fortunes in many directions. The mistake came when he introduced another genius into the intimacies of his daily life. Clemens went down to Washington during the early rehearsals of "Ah Sin."

Meantime, Rutherford B. Hayes had been elected President, and Clemens one day called with a letter of introduction from Howells, thinking to meet the Chief Executive. His own letter to Howells, later, probably does not give the real reason of his failure, but it will be amusing to those who recall the erratic personality of George Francis Train. Train and Twain were sometimes confused by the very unlettered; or, pretendedly, by Mark Twain's friends.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

BALTIMORE, *May 1 '77.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Found I was not absolutely needed in Washington so I only staid 24 hours, and am on my way home, now. I called at the White House, and got admission to Col. Rodgers, because I wanted to inquire what was the right hour to go and infest the President. It was my luck to strike the place in the dead

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waste and middle of the day, the very busiest time. I perceived that Mr. Rodgers took me for George Francis Train and had made up his mind not to let me get at the President; so at the end of half an hour I took my letter of introduction from the table and went away. It was a great pity all round, and a great loss to the nation, for I was brim full of the Eastern question. I didn't get to see the President or the Chief Magistrate either, though I had sort of a glimpse of a lady at a window who resembled her portraits.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

Howells condoled with him on his failure to see the President, "but," he added, "if you and I had both been there, our combined skill would have no doubt procured us to be expelled from the White House by Fred Douglass. But the thing seems to be a complete failure as it was." Douglass at this time being the Marshal of Columbia, gives special point to Howells's suggestion.

Later, in May, Clemens took Twichell for an excursion to Bermuda. He had begged Howells to go with them, but Howells, as usual, was full of literary affairs. Twichell and Clemens spent four glorious days tramping the length and breadth of the beautiful island, and remembered it always as one of their happiest adventures. "Put it down as an Oasis!" wrote Twichell on his return, "I'm afraid I shall not see as green a spot again soon. And it was your invention and your gift. And your company was the best of it. Indeed, I never took more comfort in being with you than on this journey, which, my boy, is saying a great deal."

To Howells, Clemens triumphantly reported the success of the excursion.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

FARMINGTON AVENUE, HARTFORD, *May 29, 1877.*

Confound you, Joe Twichell and I roamed about Bermuda day and night and never ceased to gabble and enjoy. About half the talk was—"It is a burning shame that

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Howells isn't here." "Nobody could get at the very meat and marrow of this pervading charm and deliciousness like Howells;" "How Howells would revel in the quaintness, and the simplicity of this people and the Sabbath repose of this land." "What an imperishable sketch Howells would make of Capt. West the whaler, and Capt. Hope with the patient, pathetic face, wanderer in all the oceans for 42 years, lucky in none; coming home defeated once more, now, minus his ship—resigned, uncomplaining, being used to this." "What a rattling chapter Howells would make out of the small boy Alfred, with his alert eye and military brevity and exactness of speech; and out of the old landlady; and her sacred onions; and her daughter; and the visiting clergyman; and the ancient pianos of Hamilton and the venerable music in vogue there—and forty other things which we shall leave untouched or touched but lightly upon, we not being worthy." "Dam Howells for not being here!" (this usually from me, not Twichell.)

O, your insufferable pride, which will have a fall some day! If you had gone with us and let me pay the $50 which the trip and the board and the various nicknacks and mementoes would cost, I would have picked up enough droppings from your conversation to pay me 500 per cent profit in the way of the *several* magazine articles which I could have written, whereas I can now write only one or two and am therefore largely out of pocket by your proud ways. Ponder these things. Lord, what a perfectly bewitching excursion it was! I traveled under an assumed name and was never molested with a polite attention from anybody.

Love to you all.

Yrs ever

MARK.

Aldrich, meantime, had invited the Clemenses to Ponkapog during the Bermuda absence, and Clemens hastened to send him a line expressing regrets. At the close he said:

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To T. B. Aldrich, in Ponkapog, Mass.:

FARMINGTON AVENUE, HARTFORD, *June 3, 1877.*

Day after tomorrow we leave for the hills beyond Elmira, N. Y. for the summer, when I shall hope to write a book of some sort or other to beat the people with. A work similar to your new one in the Atlantic is what I mean, though I have not heard what the nature of that one is. Immoral, I suppose. Well, you are right. Such books sell best, Howells says. Howells says he is going to make his next book indelicate. He says he thinks there is money in it. He says there is a large class of the young, in schools and seminaries who—But you let him tell you. He has ciphered it all down to a demonstration.

With the warmest remembrances to the pair of you—

Ever Yours

SAMUEL L. CLEMENS.

Clemens would naturally write something about Bermuda, and began at once, "Random Notes of an Idle Excursion," and presently completed four papers, which Howells eagerly accepted for the *Atlantic*. Then we find him plunging into another play, this time alone.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *June 27, 1877.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—If you should not like the first 2 chapters, send them to me and begin with Chapter 3—or Part 3, I believe you call these things in the magazine. I have finished No. 4, which closes the series, and will mail it tomorrow if I think of it. I like this one, I liked the preceding one (already mailed to you some time ago) but I had my doubts about 1 and 2. Do not hesitate to squelch them, even with derision and insult.

Today I am deep in a comedy which I began this morning—principal character, that old detective—I skeletoned the first act and wrote the second, today; and am dog-

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tired, now. Fifty-four close pages of MS in 7 hours. Once I wrote 55 pages at a sitting—that was on the opening chapters of the "Gilded Age" novel. When I cool down, an hour from now, I shall go to zero, I judge.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

Clemens had doubts as to the quality of the Bermuda papers, and with some reason. They did not represent him at his best. Nevertheless, they were pleasantly entertaining, and Howells expressed full approval of them for *Atlantic* use. The author remained troubled.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *July 4, 1877.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—It is *splendid* of you to say those pleasant things. But I am still plagued with doubts about Parts 1 and 2. If *you* have any, don't print. If otherwise, please make some cold villain like Lathrop read and pass sentence on them. Mind, I thought they were good, at first—it was the *second* reading that accomplished its hellish purpose on *me*. Put them up for a new verdict. Part 4 has lain in my pigeon-hole a good while, and when I put it there I had a Christian's confidence in 4 aces in it; and you can be sure it will skip toward Connecticut tomorrow before any fatal fresh reading makes me draw my bet.

I've piled up 151 MS pages on my comedy. The first, second and fourth acts are done, and done to my satisfaction, too. Tomorrow and next day will finish the 3rd act and the play. I have not written less than 30 pages any day since I began. Never had so much fun over anything in my life—never such consuming interest and delight. (But Lord bless you the second reading will fetch it!) And just think!—I had Sol Smith Russell in my mind's eye for the old detective's part, and hang it he

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has gone off pottering with Oliver Optic, or else the papers lie.

I read everything about the President's doings there with exultation.

I wish that old ass of a private secretary hadn't taken me for George Francis Train. If ignorance were a means of grace I wouldn't trade that gorilla's chances for the Archbishop of Canterbury's.

I shall call on the President again, by and by. I shall go in my war paint; and if I am obstructed the nation will have the unusual spectacle of a private secretary with a pen over one ear a tomahawk over the other.

I read the entire Atlantic this time. Wonderful number. Mrs. Rose Terry Cooke's story was a ten-strike. I wish she would write 12 old-time New England tales a year.

Good times to you all! Mind if you don't run here for a few days you will go to —— hence without having had a fore-glimpse of heaven.

MARK.

The play, "Ah Sin," that had done little enough in Washington, was that summer given another trial by Augustin Daly, at the Fifth Avenue Theater, New York, with a fine company. Clemens had undertaken to doctor the play, and it would seem to have had an enthusiastic reception on the opening night. But it was a summer audience, unspoiled by many attractions. "Ah Sin" was never a success in the New York season—never a money-maker on the road.

The reference in the first paragraph of the letter that follows is to the Bermuda chapters which Mark Twain was publishing simultaneously in England and America.

ELMIRA, *Aug. 3, 1877.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I have mailed one set of the slips to London, and told Bentley you would print Sept. 15, in October Atlantic, and he must not print earlier in Temple Bar. Have I got the dates and things right?

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I am powerful glad to see that No. 1 reads a nation sight better in print than it did in MS. I told Bentley we'd send him the slips, each time, 6 weeks before day of publication. We can do that can't we? Two months ahead would be still better I suppose, but *I* don't know.

"Ah Sin" went a-booming at the Fifth Avenue. The reception of Col. Sellers was calm compared to it.

* The criticisms were just; the criticisms of the great New York dailies are always just, intelligent, and square and honest—notwithstanding, by a blunder which nobody was seriously to blame for, I was made to say exactly the opposite of this in a newspaper some time ago. Never said it at all, and moreover I never thought it. I could not publicly correct it before the play appeared in New York, because that would look as if I had really said that thing and then was moved by fears for my pocket and my reputation to take it back. But I can correct it now, and shall do it; for now my motives cannot be impugned. When I began this letter, it had not occurred to me to use you in this connection, but it occurs to me now. Your opinion and mine, uttered a year ago, and repeated more than once since, that the candor and ability of the New York critics were beyond question, is a matter which makes it proper enough that I should speak through you at this time. Therefore if you will print this paragraph somewhere, it may remove the impression that I say unjust things which I do not think, merely for the pleasure of talking.

There, now, Can't you say——

"In a letter to Mr. Howells of the Atlantic Monthly, Mark Twain describes the reception of the new comedy 'Ah Sin,' and then goes on to say:" etc.

Beginning at the star with the words, "The criticisms were just." Mrs. Clemens says, "Don't ask that of Mr. Howells—it will be disagreeable to him." I hadn't thought of it, but I will bet two to one on the correctness of her instinct. We shall see.

Will you cut that paragraph out of this letter and pre-

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cede it with the remarks suggested (or with better ones,) and send it to the Globe or some other paper?. You can't do me a bigger favor; and yet *if it is in the least disagreeable, you mustn't think of it.* But let me know, right away, for I want to correct this thing before it grows stale again. I explained myself to only one critic (the World)—the consequence was a noble notice of the play. This one called on me, else I shouldn't have explained myself to *him.*

I have been putting in a deal of hard work on that play in New York, but it is full of incurable defects.

My old Plunkett family seemed wonderfully coarse and vulgar on the stage, but it was because they were played in such an outrageously and inexcusably coarse way. The Chinaman is killingly funny. I don't know when I have enjoyed anything as much as I did him. The people say there isn't enough of him in the piece. That's a triumph—there'll never be any *more* of him in it.

John Brougham said, "Read the list of things which the critics have condemned in the piece, and you have unassailable proofs that the play contains all the requirements of success and a long life."

That is true. Nearly every time the audience roared I knew it was over something that would be condemned in the morning (justly, too) but must be left in—for low comedies are written for the drawing-room, the kitchen and the stable, and if you cut out the kitchen and the stable the drawing-room can't support the play by itself.

There was as much money in the house the first two nights as in the first ten of Sellers. Haven't heard from the third—I came away.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

In a former letter we have seen how Mark Twain, working on a story that was to stand as an example of his best work, and become one of his surest claims to immortality (*The Adventures*

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of Huckleberry Finn), displayed little enthusiasm in his undertaking. In the following letter, which relates the conclusion of his detective comedy, we find him at the other extreme, on very tiptoe with enthusiasm over something wholly without literary value or dramatic possibility. One of the hall-marks of genius is the inability to discriminate as to the value of its output. "Simon Wheeler, Amateur Detective" was a dreary, absurd, impossible performance, as wild and unconvincing in incident and dialogue as anything out of an asylum could well be. The title which he first chose for it, "Balaam's Ass," was properly in keeping with the general scheme. Yet Mark Twain, still warm with the creative fever, had the fullest faith in it as a work of art and a winner of fortune. It would never see the light of production, of course. We shall see presently that the distinguished playwright, Dion Boucicault, good-naturedly complimented it as being better than "Ah Sin." One must wonder what that skilled artist really thought, and how he could do even this violence to his conscience.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *Wednesday P.M.* (*1877*)

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—It's finished. I was misled by hurried mis-paging. There were ten pages of notes, and over 300 pages of MS when the play was done. Did it in 42 hours, by the clock; 40 pages of the Atlantic—but then of course it's very "fat." Those are the figures, but I don't believe them myself, because the thing's impossible.

But let that pass. All day long, and every day, since I finished (in the rough) I have been diligently altering, amending, re-writing, cutting down. I finished finally today. Can't think of anything else in the way of an improvement. I thought I would stick to it while the interest was hot—and I am mighty glad I did. A week from now it will be frozen—then revising would be drudgery. (You see I learned something from the fatal blunder of putting "Ah Sin" aside before it was finished.)

She's all right, now. She reads in two hours and 20

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minutes and will play not longer than 2¾ hours. Nineteen characters; 3 acts; (I bunched 2 into 1.)

Tomorrow I will draw up an exhaustive synopsis to insert in the printed title-page for copyrighting, and then on Friday or Saturday I go to New York to remain a week or ten days and lay for an actor. Wish you could run down there and have a holiday. 'Twould be fun.

My wife won't have "Balaam's Ass"; therefore I call the piece "Cap'n Simon Wheeler, The Amateur Detective."

Yrs

MARK.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *Aug. 29, '77.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Just got your letter last night. No, dern that article,[1] it made me cry when I read it in proof, it was so oppressively and ostentatiously poor. Skim your eye over it again and you will think as I do. If Isaac and the prophets of Baal can be doctored gently and made permissible, it will redeem the thing: but if it can't, let's burn all of the articles except the tail-end of it and use that as an introduction to the next article —as I suggested in my letter to you of day before yesterday. (I had this proof from Cambridge before yours came.)

Boucicault says my new play is ever so much better than "Ah Sin;" says the Amateur detective is a bully character, too. An actor is chawing over the play in New York, to see if the old Detective is suited to his abilities. Haven't heard from him yet.

If you've got that paragraph by you yet, and if in your judgment it would be good to publish it, and if you *absolutely* would not mind doing it, then I think I'd like to have you do it—or else put some other words in my mouth that will be properer, and publish *them*. But mind, don't think of it for a moment if it is distasteful

[1] One of the Bermuda chapters.

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—and doubtless it is. I value your judgment more than my own, as to the wisdom of saying anything at all in this matter. To say nothing leaves me in an injurious position—and yet maybe I might do better to speak to the men themselves when I go to New York. This was my latest idea, and it looked wise.

We expect to leave here for home Sept. 4, reaching there the 8th—but we may be delayed a week.

Curious thing. I read passages from my play, and a full synopsis, to Boucicault, who was re-writing a play, which he wrote and laid aside 3 or 4 years ago. (My detective is about that age, you know.) Then he read a passage from his play, where a *real* detective does some things that are as idiotic as some of my old Wheeler's performances. Showed me the passages, and behold, *his* man's name is Wheeler! However, his Wheeler is not a prominent character, so we'll not alter the names. My Wheeler's name is taken from the old Jumping Frog sketch.

I am re-reading Ticknor's diary, and am charmed with it, though I still say he *refers* to too many good things when he could just as well have told them. Think of the man traveling 8 days in convoy and familiar intercourse with a band of outlaws through the mountain fastnesses of Spain—he the fourth stranger they had encountered in thirty years—and compressing this priceless experience into a single colorless paragraph of his diary! They spun yarns to this unworthy devil, too.

I wrote you a very long letter a day or two ago, but Susy Crane wanted to make a copy of it to keep, so it has not gone yet. It may go today, possibly.

We unite in warm regards to you and yours.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

The Ticknor referred to in a former letter was Professor George Ticknor, of Harvard College, a history-writer of distinction. On the margin of the "Diary" Mark Twain once wrote,

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"Ticknor is a Millet, who makes all men fall in love with him." And adds: "Millet was the cause of lovable qualities in people, and then he admired and loved those persons for the very qualities which he (without knowing it) had created in them. Perhaps it would be strictly truer of these two men to say that they bore within them the divine something in whose presence the evil in people fled away and hid itself, while all that was good in them came spontaneously forward out of the forgotten walls and corners in their systems where it was accustomed to hide."

It is Frank Millet, the artist, he is speaking of—a knightly soul whom all the Clemens household loved, and who would one day meet his knightly end with those other brave men that found death together when the *Titanic* went down.

The Clemens family was still at Quarry Farm at the end of August, and one afternoon there occurred a startling incident which Mark Twain thought worth setting down in practically duplicate letters to Howells and to Dr. John Brown. It may be of interest to the reader to know that John T. Lewis, the colored man mentioned, lived to a good old age—a pensioner of the Clemens family and, in the course of time, of H. H. Rogers. Howells's letter follows. It is the "very long letter" referred to in the foregoing.

To W. D. Howells and wife, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *Aug. 25 '77.*

MY DEAR HOWELLSES,—I thought I ought to make a sort of record of it for further reference; the pleasantest way to do that would be to write it to somebody; *but* that somebody would let it leak into print and that we wish to avoid. The Howellses would be safe—so let us tell the Howellses about it.

Day before yesterday was a fine summer day away up here on the summit. Aunt Marsh and Cousin May Marsh were here visiting Susie Crane and Livy at our farmhouse. By and by mother Langdon came up the hill in the "high carriage" with Nora the nurse and little Jervis (Charley Langdon's little boy)—Timothy the coachman driving. Behind these came Charley's wife and

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little girl in the buggy, with the new, young, spry, gray horse—a high-stepper. Theodore Crane arrived a little later.

The Bay and Susy were on hand with their nurse, Rosa. I was on hand, too. Susy Crane's trio of colored servants ditto—these being Josie, house-maid; Aunty Cord, cook, aged 62, turbaned, very tall, very broad, very fine every way (see her portrait in "A True Story Just as I Heard It" in my Sketches;) Chocklate (the laundress) (as the Bay calls her—she can't say Charlotte,) still taller, still more majestic of proportions, turbaned, very black, straight as an Indian—age 24. Then there was the farmer's wife (colored) and her little girl, Susy.

Wasn't it a good audience to get up an excitement before? Good excitable, inflammable material?

Lewis was still down town, three miles away, with his two-horse wagon, to get a load of manure. Lewis is the farmer (colored). He is of mighty frame and muscle, stocky, stooping, ungainly, has a good manly face and a clear eye. Age about 45—and the most picturesque of men, when he sits in his fluttering work-day rags, humped forward into a bunch, with his aged slouch hat mashed down over his ears and neck. It is a spectacle to make the broken-hearted smile. Lewis has worked mighty hard and remained mighty poor. At the end of each whole year's toil he can't show a gain of fifty dollars. He had borrowed money of the Cranes till he owed them $700—and he being conscientious and honest, imagine what it was to him to have to carry this stubborn, helpless load year in and year out.

Well, sunset came, and Ida the young and comely (Charley Langdon's wife) and her little Julia and the nurse Nora, drove out at the gate behind the new gray horse and started down the long hill—the high carriage receiving its load under the porte cochère. Ida was seen to turn her face toward us across the fence and intervening lawn—Theodore waved good-bye to her, for he did not know that her sign was a speechless appeal for help.

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The next moment Livy said, "Ida's driving too fast down hill!" She followed it with a sort of scream, "Her horse is running away!"

We could see two hundred yards down that descent. The buggy seemed to fly. It would strike obstructions and apparently spring the height of a man from the ground.

Theodore and I left the shrieking crowd behind and ran down the hill bare-headed and shouting. A neighbor appeared at his gate—a tenth of a second too late!—the buggy vanished past him like a thought. My last glimpse showed it for one instant, far down the descent, springing high in the air out of a cloud of dust, and then it disappeared. As I flew down the road my impulse was to shut my eyes as I turned them to the right or left, and so delay for a moment the ghastly spectacle of mutilation and death I was expecting.

I ran on and on, still spared this spectacle, but saying to myself: "I shall see it at the turn of the road; they never can pass that turn alive." When I came in sight of that turn I saw two wagons there bunched together —one of them full of people. I said, "Just so—they are staring petrified at the remains."

But when I got amongst that bunch, there sat Ida in her buggy and nobody hurt, not even the horse or the vehicle. Ida was pale but serene. As I came tearing down, she smiled back over her shoulder at me and said, "Well, we're *alive* yet, *aren't* we?" A miracle had been performed—nothing else.

You see Lewis, the prodigious, humped upon his front seat, had been toiling up, on his load of manure; he saw the frantic horse plunging down the hill toward him, on a full gallop, throwing his heels as high as a man's head at every jump. So Lewis turned his team diagonally across the road just at the "turn," thus making a V with the fence—the running horse could not escape that, but must enter it. Then Lewis sprang to the ground and stood in this V. He gathered his vast strength, and with a

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perfect Creedmoor aim he seized the gray horse's bit as he plunged by and fetched him up standing!

It was down hill, mind you. Ten feet *further* down hill neither Lewis nor any other man could have saved them, for they would have been on the abrupt "turn," then. But how this miracle was ever accomplished at all, by human strength, generalship and accuracy, is clean beyond my comprehension—and grows more so the more I go and examine the ground and try to believe it was actually done. I know one thing, well; if Lewis had missed his aim he would have been killed on the spot in the trap he had made for himself, and we should have found the rest of the remains away down at the bottom of the steep ravine.

Ten minutes later Theodore and I arrived opposite the house, with the servants straggling after us, and shouted to the distracted group on the porch, "Everybody safe!"

Believe it? Why how *could* they? They knew the road perfectly. We might as well have said it to people who had seen their friends go over Niagara.

However, we convinced them; and then, instead of saying something, or going on crying, they grew very still—words could not express it, I suppose.

Nobody could do anything that night, or sleep, either; but there was a deal of moving talk, with long pauses between—pictures of that flying carriage, these pauses represented—this picture intruded itself all the time and disjointed the talk.

But yesterday evening late, when Lewis arrived from down town he found his supper spread, and some presents of books there, with very complimentary writings on the fly-leaves, and certain very complimentary letters, and more or less greenbacks of dignified denomination pinned to these letters and fly-leaves,—and one said, among other things, (signed by the Cranes) "We cancel $400 of your indebtedness to us," &c. &c.

(The end thereof is not yet, of course, for Charley Lang-

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don is West and will arrive ignorant of all these things, today.)

The supper-room had been kept locked and imposingly secret and mysterious until Lewis should arrive; but around that part of the house were gathered Lewis's wife and child, Chocklate, Josie, Aunty Cord and our Rosa, canvassing things and waiting impatiently. They were all on hand when the curtain rose.

Now, Aunty Cord is a violent Methodist and Lewis an implacable Dunker-Baptist. Those two are inveterate religious disputants. The revealments having been made Aunty Cord said with effusion—

"Now, let folks go on saying there ain't no God! Lewis, the Lord sent you there to stop that horse."

Says Lewis—

"Then who sent the *horse* there in sich a shape?"

But I want to call your attention to one thing. When Lewis arrived the other evening, after saving those lives by a feat which I think is the most marvelous of any I can call to mind—when he arrived, hunched up on his manure wagon and as grotesquely picturesque as usual, everybody wanted to go and see how he looked. They came back and said he was beautiful. It was *so*, too—and yet he would have *photographed* exactly as he would have done any day these past 7 years that he has occupied this farm.

Aug. 27.

P. S. Our little romance in real life is happily and satisfactorily completed. Charley has come, listened, acted—and now John T. Lewis has ceased to consider himself as belonging to that class called "the poor."

It has been known, during some years, that it was Lewis's purpose to buy a thirty dollar silver watch some day, if he ever got where he could afford it. Today Ida has given him a new, sumptuous gold Swiss stem-winding stop-watch; and if any scoffer shall say, "Behold this thing is out of character," there is an inscription within, which will silence him; for it will teach him that

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this wearer aggrandizes the watch, not the watch the wearer.

I was asked betorehand, if this would be a wise gift, and I said "Yes, the very wisest of all; I know the colored race, and I know that in Lewis's eyes this fine toy will throw the other more valuable testimonials far away into the shade. If he lived in England the Humane Society would give him a gold medal as costly as this watch, and nobody would say: "It is out of character." If Lewis chose to wear a town clock, who would become it better?

Lewis has sound common sense, and is not going to be spoiled. The instant he found himself possessed of money, he forgot himself in a plan to make his old father comfortable, who is wretchedly poor and lives down in Maryland. His next act, on the spot, was the proffer to the Cranes of the $300 of his remaining indebtedness to them. This was put off by them to the indefinite future, for he is not going to be allowed to pay that at all, though he doesn't know it.

A letter of acknowledgment from Lewis contains a sentence which raises it to the dignity of literature:

"But I beg to say, humbly, that inasmuch as divine providence saw fit to use me as a instrument for the saving of those presshious lives, the honner conferd upon me was greater than the feat performed."

That is well said. Yrs ever MARK.

Howells was moved to use the story in the "Contributors' Club," and warned Clemens against letting it get into the newspapers. He declared he thought it one of the most impressive things he had ever read. But Clemens seems never to have allowed it to be used in any form. In its entirety, therefore, it is quite new matter.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Sept. 19, 1877.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I don't really see how the story of the runaway horse could read well with the little de-

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tails of names and places and things left out. *They* are the true life of all narrative. It wouldn't quite do to print them at this time. We'll talk about it when you come. Delicacy—a sad, sad false delicacy—robs literature of the best two things among its belongings. Family-circle narrative and obscene stories. But no matter; in that better world which I trust we are all going to I have the hope and belief that they will not be denied us.

Say—Twichell and I had an adventure at sea, 4½ months ago, which I did not put in my Bermuda articles, because there was not enough to it. But the press dispatches bring the sequel today, and now there's plenty to it. A sailless, wasteless, chartless, compassless, grubless old condemned tub that has been drifting helpless about the ocean for 4 months and a half, begging bread and water like any other tramp, flying a signal of distress permanently, and with 13 innocent, marveling chuckle-headed Bermuda niggers on board, taking a Pleasure Excursion! Our ship fed the poor devils on the 25th of last May, far out at sea and left them to bullyrag their way to New York—and now they ain't as near New York as they were then by 250 miles! They have drifted 750 miles and are still drifting in the relentless Gulf Stream! What a delicious magazine chapter it would make—but I had to deny myself. I had to come right out in the papers at once, with my details, so as to try to raise the government's sympathy sufficiently to have better succor sent them than the cutter Colfax, which went a little way in search of them the other day and then struck a fog and gave it up.

If the President were in Washington I would telegraph him.

When I hear that the "Jonas Smith" has been found again, I mean to send for one of those darkies, to come to Hartford and give me his adventures for an Atlantic article.

Likely you will see my today's article in the newspapers.

Yrs ever, MARK.

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The revenue cutter Colfax went after the Jonas Smith, thinking there was mutiny or other crime on board. It occurs to me now that, since there is only mere suffering and misery and nobody to punish, it ceases to be a matter which (a republican form of) government will feel authorized to interfere in further. Dam a republican form of government.

Clemens thought he had given up lecturing for good; he was prosperous and he had no love for the platform. But one day an idea popped into his head: Thomas Nast, the "father of the American cartoon," had delivered a successful series of illustrated lectures—talks for which he made the drawings as he went along. Mark Twain's idea was to make a combination with Nast. His letter gives us the plan in full.

To Thomas Nast, Morristown, N. J.:

HARTFORD, CONN. *1877.*

MY DEAR NAST,—I did not think I should ever stand on a platform again until the time was come for me to say "I die innocent." But the same old offers keep arriving. I have declined them all, just as usual, though sorely tempted, as usual.

Now, I do not decline because I mind talking to an audience, but because (1) traveling alone is so heart-breakingly dreary, and (2) shouldering the whole show is such a cheer-killing responsibility.

Therefore, I now propose to you what you proposed to me in 1867, ten years ago (when I was unknown,) viz., that you stand on the platform and make pictures, and I stand by you and blackguard the audience. I should enormously enjoy meandering around (to big towns—don't want to go to the little ones)—with you for company.

My idea is not to fatten the lecture agents and lyceums on the spoils, but put all the ducats religiously into two

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equal piles, and say to the artist and lecturer, "Absorb these."

For instance— [Here follows a plan and a possible list of cities to be visited. The letter continues]:

Call the gross receipts $100,000 for four months and a half, and the profit from $60,000 to $75,000 (I try to make the figures large enough, and leave it to the public to reduce them.)

I did not put in Philadelphia because Pugh owns that town, and last winter when I made a little reading-trip he only paid me $300 and pretended his concert (I read fifteen minutes in the midst of a concert) cost him a vast sum, and so he couldn't afford any more. I could get up a better concert with a barrel of cats.

I have imagined two or three pictures and concocted the accompanying remarks to see how the thing would go. I was charmed.

Well, you think it over, Nast, and drop me a line. We should have some fun.

Yours truly,

SAMUEL L. CLEMENS.

The plan came to nothing. Nast, like Clemens, had no special taste for platforming, and while undoubtedly there would have been large profits in the combination, the promise of the venture did not compel his acceptance.

In spite of his distaste for the platform Mark Twain was always giving readings and lectures, without charge, for some worthy Hartford cause. He was ready to do what he could to help an entertainment along, if he could do it in his own way —an original way, sometimes, and not always gratifying to the committee, whose plans were likely to be prearranged.

For one thing, Clemens, supersensitive in the matter of putting himself forward in his own town, often objected to any special exploitation of his name. This always distressed the committee, who saw a large profit to their venture in the prestige of his fame. The following characteristic letter was written in self-defense when, on one such occasion, a committee had become sufficiently peevish to abandon a worthy enterprise.

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To an Entertainment Committee, in Hartford:

Nov. 9.

E. S. SYKES, Esq:

DR. SIR,—Mr. Burton's note puts upon me all the blame of the destruction of an enterprise which had for its object the succor of the Hartford poor. That is to say, this enterprise has been dropped because of the "dissatisfaction with Mr. Clemens's stipulations." Therefore I must be allowed to say a word in my defense.

There were two "stipulations"—exactly two. I made one of them; if the other was made at all, it was a joint one, from the choir *and* me.

My individual stipulation was, that my name should be kept out of the newspapers. The joint one was that sufficient tickets to insure a good sum should be sold before the date of the performance should be set. (Understand, we wanted a good *sum*—I do not think any of us bothered about a good *house;* it was money we were after)

Now you perceive that my concern is simply with my individual stipulation. Did *that* break up the enterprise?

Eugene Burton said he would sell $300 worth of the tickets himself.—Mr. Smith said he would sell $200 or $300 worth himself. My plan for Asylum Hill Church would have ensured $150 from that quarter.—All this in the face of my "Stipulation." It was proposed to raise $1000; did my stipulation render the raising of $400 or $500 in a dozen churches impossible?

My stipulation is easily defensible. When a mere reader or lecturer has appeared 3 or 4 times in a town of Hartford's size, he is a good deal more than likely to get a very unpleasant snub if he shoves himself forward about once or twice more. Therefore I long ago made up my mind that whenever I again appeared here, it should be only in a *minor* capacity and not as a chief attraction.

Now, I placed that harmless and very justifiable

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stipulation before the committee the other day; they carried it to headquarters and it was accepted there. I am not informed that any objection was made to it, or that it was regarded as an offense. It seems late in the day, now, after a good deal of trouble has been taken and a good deal of thankless work done by the committees, to suddenly tear up the contract and then turn and bowl *me* down from long range as being the destroyer of it.

If the enterprise has failed because of my individual stipulation, here you have my proper and reasonable reasons for making that stipulation.

If it has failed because of the *joint* stipulation, put the blame *there*, and let us share it collectively.

I think our plan was a good one. I do not doubt that Mr. Burton still approves of it, too. I believe the objections come from other quarters, and not from him. Mr. Twichell used the following words in last Sunday's sermon, (if I remember correctly):

"My hearers, the prophet Deuteronomy says this wise thing: 'Though ye plan a goodly house for the poor, and plan it with wisdom, and do take off your coats and set to to build it, with high courage, yet shall the croaker presently come, and lift up his voice, (having his coat on,) and say, Verily this plan is not well planned—and he will go his way; and the obstructionist will come, and lift up his voice, (having his coat on,) and say, Behold, this is but a sick plan—and he will go his way; and the man that *knows* it all will come, and lift up his voice, (having his coat on,) and say, Lo, call they *this* a plan?—then will he go *his* way; and the places which knew him once shall know him no more forever, because he was not, for God took him. Now therefore I say unto you, Verily that *house will not be builded*. And I say this also: He that waiteth for all men to be satisfied with his plan, let him seek eternal life, for he shall *need* it.'"

This portion of Mr. Twichell's sermon made a great impression upon me, and I was grieved that some one

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had not wakened me earlier so that I might have heard what went before.

Yr truly

S. L. CLEMENS.

Mr. Sykes (of the firm of Sykes & Newton, the Allen House Pharmacy) replied that he had read the letter to the committee and that it had set those gentlemen right who had not before understood the situation. "If others were as ready to do their part as yourself our poor would not want assistance," he said, in closing.

We come now to an incident which assumes the proportions of an episode—even of a catastrophe—in Mark Twain's career. The disaster was due to a condition noted a few pages earlier—the inability of genius to judge its own efforts. The story has now become history—printed history—it having been sympathetically told by Howells in *My Mark Twain*, and more exhaustively, with a report of the speech that invited the lightning, in a former work by the present writer.[1]

The speech was made at John Greenleaf Whittier's seventieth birthday dinner, given by the *Atlantic* staff on the evening of December 17, 1877. It was intended as a huge joke—a joke that would shake the sides of those venerable Boston deities, Longfellow, Emerson, Holmes, and the rest of that venerated group. Clemens had been a favorite at the *Atlantic* lunches and dinners—a speech by him always an event. This time he decided to outdo himself.

He did that, but not in the way he had intended. To use one of his own metaphors, he stepped out to meet the rainbow and got struck by lightning. His joke was not of the Boston kind or size. When its full nature burst upon the company—when the ears of the assembled diners heard the sacred names of Longfellow, Emerson, and Holmes lightly associated with human aspects removed—oh, very far removed—from Cambridge and Concord, a chill fell upon the diners that presently became amazement, and then creeping paralysis. Nobody knew afterward whether the great speech that he had so gaily planned ever came to a natural end or not. Somebody—the next on the program—attempted to follow him, but presently the company melted out of the doors and crept away into the night.

[1] In *Mark Twain: A Biography*. Harper & Brothers.

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It seemed to Mark Twain that his career had come to an end. Back in Hartford, sweating and suffering through sleepless nights, he wrote Howells his anguish.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Sunday Night. 1877.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—My sense of disgrace does not abate. It grows. I see that it is going to add itself to my list of permanencies—a list of humiliations that extends back to when I was seven years old, and which keep on persecuting me regardless of my repentancies.

I feel that my misfortune has injured me all over the country; therefore it will be best that I retire from before the public at present. It will hurt the Atlantic for me to appear in its pages, now. So it is my opinion and my wife's that the telephone story had better be suppressed. Will you return those proofs or revises to me, so that I can use the same on some future occasion?

It seems as if I must have been insane when I wrote that speech and saw no harm in it, no disrespect toward those men whom I reverenced so much. And what shame I brought upon *you*, after what you said in introducing me! It burns me like fire to think of it.

The whole matter is a dreadful subject—let me drop it here—at least on paper.

Penitently yrs,

MARK.

Howells sent back a comforting letter. "I have no idea of dropping you out of the *Atlantic*," he wrote; "and Mr. Houghton has still less, if possible. You are going to help and not hurt us many a year yet, if you will. . . . You are not going to be floored by it; there is more justice than that, even in this world."

Howells added that Charles Elliot Norton had expressed just the right feeling concerning the whole affair, and that many who had not heard the speech, but read the newspaper reports of it, had found it without offense.

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Clemens wrote contrite letters to Holmes, Emerson, and Longfellow, and received most gracious acknowledgments. Emerson, indeed, had not heard the speech. His faculties were already blurred by the mental mists that would eventually shut him in. Clemens wrote again to Howells, this time with less anguish.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Friday, 1877.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Your letter was a godsend; and perhaps the welcomest part of it was your consent that I write to those gentlemen; for you discouraged my hints in that direction that morning in Boston—rightly, too, for my offense was yet too new, then. Warner has tried to hold up our hands like the good fellow he is, but poor Twichell could not say a word, and confessed that he would rather take nearly any punishment than face Livy and me. He hasn't been here since.

It is curious, but I pitched early upon Mr. Norton as the very man who would think some generous thing about that matter, whether he said it or not. It is splendid to be a man like that—but it is given to few to be.

I wrote a letter yesterday, and sent a copy to each of the three. I wanted to send a copy to Mr. Whittier also, since the offense was done also against him, being committed in his presence and he the guest of the occasion, besides holding the well-nigh sacred place he does in his people's estimation; but I didn't know whether to venture or not, and so ended by doing nothing. It seemed an intrusion to approach him, and even Livy seemed to have her doubts as to the best and properest way to do in the case. I do not reverence Mr. Emerson less, but somehow I could approach him easier.

Send me those proofs, if you have got them handy; I want to submit them to Wylie; he won't show them to anybody.

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Had a very pleasant and considerate letter from Mr. Houghton, today, and was very glad to receive it.

You can't imagine how brilliant and beautiful that new brass fender is, and how perfectly naturally it takes its place under the carved oak. How they did scour it up before they sent it! I lied a good deal about it when I came home—so for *once* I kept a secret and surprised Livy on a Christmas morning!

I haven't done a stroke of work since the Atlantic dinner; have only moped around. But I'm going to try tomorrow. How could I ever have.

Ah, well, I am a great and sublime fool. But then I am God's fool, and all His works must be contemplated with respect.

Livy and I join in the warmest regards to you and yours,

Yrs ever,

MARK.

Longfellow, in his reply, said: "I do not believe anybody was much hurt. Certainly I was not, and Holmes tells me he was not. So I think you may dismiss the matter from your mind without further remorse."

Holmes wrote: "It never occurred to me for a moment to take offense, or feel wounded by your playful use of my name."

Miss Ellen Emerson replied for her father (in a letter to Mrs. Clemens) that the speech had made no impression upon him, giving at considerable length the impression it had made on herself and other members of the family.

Clearly, it was not the principals who were hurt, but only those who held them in awe, though one can realize that this would not make it much easier for Mark Twain.

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XVIII

LETTERS FROM EUROPE, 1878–79. TRAMPING WITH TWICHELL. WRITING A NEW TRAVEL BOOK. LIFE IN MUNICH

WHETHER the unhappy occurrence at the Whittier dinner had anything to do with Mark Twain's resolve to spend a year or two in Europe cannot be known now. There were other good reasons for going, one in particular being a demand for another book of travel. It was also true, as he explains in a letter to his mother, that his days were full of annoyances, making it difficult for him to work. He had a tendency to invest money in almost any glittering enterprise that came along, and at this time he was involved in the promotion of a variety of patent rights that brought him no return other than assessment and vexation.

Clemens's mother was by this time living with her son Orion and his wife, in Iowa.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens, in Keokuk, Iowa:

HARTFORD, *Feb. 17, 1878.*

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I suppose I am the worst correspondent in the whole world; and yet I grow worse and worse all the time. My conscience blisters me for not writing you, but it has ceased to abuse me for not writing other folks.

Life has come to be a very serious matter with me. I have a badgered, harassed feeling, a good part of my time. It comes mainly of business responsibilities and annoyances, and the persecution of kindly letters from well meaning strangers—to whom I must be rudely silent or else put in the biggest half of my time bothering over

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answers. There are other things also that help to consume my time and defeat my projects. Well, the consequence is, I cannot write a book at home. This cuts my income down. Therefore, I have about made up my mind to take my tribe and fly to some little corner of Europe and budge no more until I shall have completed one of the half dozen books that lie begun, up stairs. Please say nothing about this at present.

We propose to sail the 11th of April. I shall go to Fredonia to meet you, but it will not be well for Livy to make that trip I am afraid. However, we shall see. I will hope she can go.

Mr. Twichell has just come in, so I must go to him. We are all well, and send love to you all.

Affly, SAM.

He was writing few letters at this time, and doing but little work. There were always many social events during the winter, and what with his European plans and a diligent study of the German language, which the entire family undertook, his days and evenings were full enough. Howells wrote protesting against the European travel and berating him for his silence:

"I never was in Berlin and don't know any family hotel there. I should be glad I didn't, if it would keep you from going. You deserve to put up at the Sign of the Savage in Vienna. Really, it's a great blow to me to hear of that prospected sojourn. It's a shame. I must see you, somehow, before you go. I'm in dreadfully low spirits about it.

"I was afraid your silence meant something wicked."

Clemens replied promptly, urging a visit to Hartford, adding a postscript for Mrs. Howells, characteristic enough to warrant preservation.

P. S. to Mrs. Howells, in Boston:

Feb. '78.

DEAR MRS. HOWELLS,—Mrs. Clemens wrote you a letter, and handed it to me half an hour ago, while I was folding mine to Mr. Howells. I laid that letter on this

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table before me while I added the paragraph about R——'s application. Since then I have been hunting and swearing, and swearing and hunting, but I can't find a sign of that letter. It is the most astonishing disappearance I ever heard of. Mrs. Clemens has gone off driving—so I will have to try and give you an idea of her communication from memory. Mainly it consisted of an urgent desire that you come to see us next week, if you can possibly manage it, for that will be a reposeful time, the turmoil of breaking up beginning the week after. She wants you to tell her about Italy, and advise her in that connection, if you will. Then she spoke of her plans—hers, mind you, for I never have anything quite so definite as a plan. She proposes to stop a fortnight in (confound the place, I've forgotten what it was,) then go and *live* in Dresden till sometime in the summer; then retire to Switzerland for the hottest season, then stay a while in Venice and put in the winter in Munich—This program subject to modifications according to circumstances. She said something about some little by-trips here and there, but they didn't stick in my memory because the idea didn't charm me.

(They have just telephoned me from the Courant office that Bayard Taylor and family have taken rooms in our ship, the Holsatia, for the 11th April.)

Do come, if you possibly can!—and remember and don't forget to avoid letting Mrs. Clemens find out I lost her letter. Just answer her the same as if you had got it.

Sincerely yours

S. L. CLEMENS.

The Howellses came, as invited, for a final reunion before the breaking up. This was in the early half of March; the Clemenses were to sail on the 11th of the following month.

Orion Clemens, meantime, had conceived a new literary idea and was piling in his MS. as fast as possible to get his brother's judgment on it before the sailing-date. It was not a very good time to send MS., but Mark Twain seems to have read it and

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given it some consideration. "The Journey in Heaven," of his own, which he mentions, was the story published so many years later under the title of "Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven." He had begun it in 1868, on his voyage to San Francisco, it having been suggested by conversations with Capt. Ned Wakeman, of one of the Pacific steamers. Wakeman also appears in *Roughing It*, Chap. L, as Capt. Ned Blakely, and again in one of the "Rambling Notes of an Idle Excursion," as "Captain Hurricane Jones."

To Orion Clemens, in Keokuk:

HARTFORD, *Mch. 23, 1878.*

MY DEAR BRO.,—Every man must *learn* his trade—not pick it up. God requires that he learn it by slow and painful processes. The apprentice-hand, in black-smithing, in medicine, in literature, in everything, is a thing that can't be hidden. It always shows.

But happily there is a market for apprentice work, else the "Innocents Abroad" would have had no sale. Happily, too, there's a wider market for some sorts of apprentice literature than there is for the very best of journey-work. This work of yours is exceedingly crude, but I am free to say it is less crude than I expected it to be, and considerably better work than I believed you could do, it is too crude to offer to any prominent periodical, so I shall speak to the N. Y. Weekly people. To publish it there will be to bury it. Why could not some good genius have sent me to the N. Y. Weekly with my apprentice sketches?

You should not publish it in book form at all—for this reason: it is only an imitation of Verne—it is not a burlesque. But I think it may be regarded as proof that Verne cannot *be* burlesqued.

In accompanying notes I have suggested that you vastly modify the first visit to hell, and leave out the second visit altogether. Nobody would, or ought to print those things. You are not advanced enough in literature to venture upon a matter requiring so much

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practice. Let me show you what a man has got to go through:

Nine years ago I mapped out my "Journey in Heaven." I discussed it with literary friends whom I could trust to keep it to themselves.

I gave it a deal of thought, from time to time. After a year or more I wrote it up. It was not a success. Five years ago I wrote it again, altering the plan. That MS is at my elbow now. It was a considerable improvement on the first attempt, but still it wouldn't do—last year and year before I talked frequently with Howells about the subject, and he kept urging me to do it again.

So I thought and thought, at odd moments and at last I struck what I considered to be the right plan! Mind I have never altered the *ideas*, from the first—the plan was the difficulty. When Howells was here last, I laid before him the whole story without referring to my MS and he said: "You have got it sure this time. But drop the idea of making mere magazine stuff of it. Don't waste it. Print it by itself—publish it first in England—ask Dean Stanley to endorse it, which will draw some of the teeth of the religious press, and then reprint in America." I doubt my ability to get Dean Stanley to do anything of the sort, but I shall do the rest—and this is all a secret which you must not divulge.

Now look here—I have tried, all these years, to think of some way of "doing" hell too—and have always had to give it up. Hell, in my book, will not occupy five pages of MS I judge—it will be only covert hints, I suppose, and quickly dropped, I may end by not even referring to it.

And mind you, in my opinion you will find that you can't write up hell so it will stand printing. Neither Howells nor I believe in hell or the divinity of the Savior, but no matter, the Savior is none the less a sacred Personage, and a man should have no desire or disposition to refer to him lightly, profanely, or otherwise than with the profoundest reverence.

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The only safe thing is not to introduce him, or refer to him at all, I suspect. I have entirely rewritten one book 3 (perhaps 4) times, changing the plan every time—1200 pages of MS. wasted and burned—and shall tackle it again, one of these years and maybe succeed at last. Therefore you need not expect to get *your* book right the first time. Go to work and revamp or rewrite it. God only exhibits his thunder and lightning at intervals, and so they always command attention. These are God's adjectives. You thunder and lightning too much; the reader ceases to get under the bed, by and by.

Mr. Perkins will send you and Ma your checks when we are gone. But don't write him, ever, except a single line in case he forgets the checks—for the man is driven to death with work.

I see you are half promising yourself a monthly return for your book. In my experience, previously counted chickens never *do* hatch. How many of mine I have counted! and never a one of them but failed! It is much better to hedge disappointment by not counting.—Unexpected money is a delight. The same sum is a bitterness when you expected more.

My time in America is growing mighty short. Perhaps we can manage in this way: Imprimis, if the N. Y. Weekly people know that you are my brother, they will turn that fact into an advertisement—a thing of value to *them*, but not to you and me. This must be prevented. I will write them a note to say you have a friend near Keokuk, *Charles S. Miller*, who has a MS for sale which you think is a pretty clever travesty on Verne; and if they want it they might write to him in your care. Then if any correspondence ensues between you and them, let Mollie write for you and sign your name—your own hand writing representing Miller's. Keep yourself out of sight till you make a strike on your own merits—there is no other way to get a fair verdict upon your merits.

Later—I've written the note to Smith, and with noth-

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ing in it which he can use as an advertisement. I'm called—Good bye—love to you both.

We leave here next Wednesday for Elmira: we leave there Apl. 9 or 10—and sail 11th

Yr Bro.

SAM.

In the letter that follows the mention of Annie and Sam refers, of course, to the children of Mrs. Moffett, who had been Pamela Clemens. They were grown now, and Annie Moffett was married to Charles L. Webster, who later was to become Mark Twain's business partner. The Moffetts and Websters were living in Fredonia at this time, and Clemens had been to pay them a good-by visit. The Taylor dinner mentioned was a farewell banquet given to Bayard Taylor, who had been appointed Minister to Germany, and was to sail on the ship with Mark Twain. Mark Twain's mother was visiting in Fredonia when this letter was written.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens, in Fredonia:

Apr. 7, '78.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have told Livy all about Annie's beautiful house, and about Sam and Charley, and about Charley's ingenious manufactures and his strong manhood and good promise, and how glad I am that he and Annie married. And I have told her about Annie's excellent house-keeping, also about the great Bacon conflict; (I told you it was a hundred to one that neither Livy nor the European powers had heard of that desolating struggle.)

And I have told her how beautiful you are in your age and how bright your mind is with its old-time brightness, and how she and the children would enjoy you. And I have told her how singularly young Pamela is looking, and what a fine large fellow Sam is, and how ill the lingering syllable "my" to his name fits his port and figure.

Well, Pamela, after thinking it over for a day or so, I came near inquiring about a state-room in our ship for Sam, to please you, but my wiser former resolution came

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back to me. It is not for his good that he have friends in the ship. His conduct in the Bacon business shows that he will develop rapidly into a manly man as soon as he is cast loose from your apron strings.

You don't teach him to push ahead and do and dare things for himself, but you do just the reverse. You are assisted in your damaging work by the tyrannous ways of a village—villagers watch each other and so make cowards of each other. After Sam shall have voyaged to Europe by himself, and rubbed against the world and taken and returned its cuffs, do you think he will hesitate to escort a guest into any whisky-mill in Fredonia when he himself has no sinful business to transact there? No, he will smile at the idea. If he avoids this courtesy now from principle, of course I find no fault with it at all—only if he *thinks* it is principle he may be mistaken; a close examination may show it is only a bowing to the tyranny of public opinion.

I only say it may—I cannot venture to say it will. Hartford is not a large place, but it is broader than to have ways of that sort. Three or four weeks ago, at a Moody and Sankey meeting, the preacher read a letter from somebody "exposing" the fact that a prominent clergyman had gone from one of those meetings, bought a bottle of lager beer and drank it on the premises (a drug store.)

A tempest of indignation swept the town. Our clergymen and everybody else said the "culprit" had not only done an innocent thing, but had done it in an open, manly way, and it was nobody's right or business to find fault with it. Perhaps this dangerous latitude comes of the fact that we never have any temperance "rot" going on in Hartford.

I find here a letter from Orion, submitting some new matter in his story for criticism. When You write him, please tell him to do the best he can and bang away. I can do nothing further in this matter, for I have but 3 days left in which to settle a deal of important business

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and answer a bushel and a half of letters. I am very nearly tired to death.

I was so jaded and worn, at the Taylor dinner, that I found I could not remember 3 sentences of the speech I had memorized, and therefore got up and said so and excused myself from speaking. I arrived here at 3 o'clock this morning. I think the next 3 days will finish me. The idea of sitting down to a job of literary criticism is simply ludicrous.

A young lady passenger in our ship has been placed under Livy's charge. Livy couldn't easily get out of it, and did not want to, on her own account, but fully expected I would make trouble when I heard of it. But I didn't. A girl can't well travel alone, so I offered no objection. She leaves us at Hamburg. So I've got 6 people in my care, now—which is just 6 too many for a man of my unexecutive capacity. I expect nothing else but to lose some of them overboard.

We send our loving good-byes to all the household and hope to see you again after a spell.

Affly Yrs.

SAM.

There are no other American letters of this period. The Clemens party, which included Miss Clara Spaulding, of Elmira, sailed as planned, on the *Holsatia*, April 11, 1878. As before stated, Bayard Taylor was on the ship; also Murat Halstead and family. On the eve of departure, Clemens sent to Howells this farewell word:

"And that reminds me, ungrateful dog that I am, that I owe as much to your training as the rude country job-printer owes to the city boss who takes him in hand and teaches him the right way to handle his art. I was talking to Mrs. Clemens about this the other day, and grieving because I never mentioned it to you, thereby seeming to ignore it, or to be unaware of it. Nothing that has passed under your eye needs any revision before going into a volume, while all my other stuff does need so *much*."

A characteristic tribute, and from the heart.

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The first European letter came from Frankfort, a rest on their way to Heidelberg.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

FRANKFORT ON THE MAIN, *May 4, 1878.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I only propose to write a single line to say we are still around. Ah, I have such a deep, grateful, unutterable sense of being "out of it all." I think I forecaste some of the advantages of being dead. Some of the joy of it. I don't read any newspapers or care for them. When people tell me England has declared war, I drop the subject, feeling that it is none of my business; when they tell me Mrs. Tilton has confessed and Mr. B. denied, I say both of them have done that before, therefore let the worn stub of the Plymouth white-wash brush be brought out once more, and let the faithful spit on their hands and get to work again regardless of me—for I am out of it all.

We had 2 almost devilish weeks at sea (and I tell you Bayard Taylor is a really lovable man—which you already knew) then we staid a week in the beautiful, the *very* beautiful city of Hamburg; and since then we have been fooling along, 4 hours per day by rail, with a courier, spending the other 20 in hotels whose enormous bedchambers and private parlors are an overpowering marvel to me. Day before yesterday, in Cassel, we had a love of a bedroom 31 feet long, and a parlor with 2 sofas, 12 chairs, a writing desk and 4 tables scattered around, here and there in it. Made of red silk, too, by George.

The times and times I wish you were along! *You* could throw some fun into the journey; whereas I go on, day by day, in a smileless state of solemn admiration.

What a paradise this is! What clean clothes, what good faces, what tranquil contentment, what prosperity, what genuine freedom, what superb government. And I am so happy, for I am responsible for none of it. I am only here to enjoy. How charmed I am when I overhear

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a German word which I understand. With love from us 2 to you 2.

MARK.

P. S. We are not taking six days to go from Hamburg to Heidelberg because we prefer it. Quite on the contrary. Mrs. Clemens picked up a dreadful cold and sore throat on board ship and still keeps them in stock—so she could only travel 4 hours a day. She wanted to dive straight through, but I had different notions about the wisdom of it. I found that 4 hours a day was the best she could do. Before I forget it, our permanent address is Care Messrs. Koester & Co., Bankers, Heidelberg. We go there tomorrow.

Poor Susy! From the day we reached German soil, we have required Rosa to speak German to the children —which they hate with all their souls. The other morning in Hanover, Susy came to us (from Rosa, in the nursery) and said, in halting syllables, "Papa, vie viel uhr ist es?" —then turned with pathos in her big eyes, and said, "Mamma, I wish Rosa was made in English."

(Unfinished)

Frankfort was a brief halting-place, their destination being Heidelberg. They were presently located there in the beautiful Schloss hotel, which overlooks the old castle with its forest setting, the flowing Neckar, and the distant valley of the Rhine. Clemens, who had discovered the location, and loved it, toward the end of May reported to Howells his felicities.

Part of letter to W. D. Howells, in Boston:

SCHLOSS-HOTEL HEIDELBERG, *Sunday, a.m., May 26, 1878.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,— . . . divinely located. From this airy porch among the shining groves we look down upon Heidelberg Castle, and upon the swift Neckar, and the town, and out over the wide green level of the Rhine valley—a marvelous prospect. We are in a cul-de-sac

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formed of hill-ranges and river; we are on the side of a steep mountain; the river at our feet is walled, on its other side, (yes, on both sides,) by a steep and wooded mountain-range which rises abruptly aloft from the water's edge; portions of these mountains are densely wooded; the plain of the Rhine, seen through the mouth of this pocket, has many and peculiar charms for the eye.

Our bedroom has two great glass bird-cages (enclosed balconies) one looking toward the Rhine valley and sunset, the other looking up the Neckar cul-de-sac, and naturally we spend nearly all our time in these—when one is sunny the other is shady. We have tables and chairs in them; we do our reading, writing, studying, smoking and suppering in them.

The view from these bird-cages is my despair. The pictures change from one enchanting aspect to another in ceaseless procession, never keeping one form half an hour, and never taking on an unlovely one.

And then Heidelberg on a dark night! It is massed, away down there, almost right under us, you know, and stretches off toward the valley. Its curved and interlacing streets are a cobweb, beaded thick with lights—a wonderful thing to see; then the rows of lights on the arched bridges, and their glinting reflections in the water; and away at the far end, the Eisenbahnhof, with its twenty solid acres of glittering gas-jets, a huge garden, as one may say, whose every plant is a flame.

These balconies are the darlingest things. I have spent all the morning in this north one. Counting big and little, it has 256 panes of glass in it; so one is in effect right out in the free sunshine, and yet sheltered from wind and rain—and likewise doored and curtained from whatever may be going on in the bedroom. It must have been a noble genius who devised this hotel. Lord, how blessed is the repose, the tranquillity of this place! Only two sounds; the happy clamor of the birds in the groves, and the muffled music of the Neckar, tumbling over the opposing dykes. It is no hardship to lie awake awhile,

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nights, for this subdued roar has exactly the sound of a steady rain beating upon a roof. It is so healing to the spirit; and it bears up the thread of one's imaginings as the accompaniment bears up a song.

While Livy and Miss Spaulding have been writing at this table, I have sat tilted back, near by, with a pipe and the last Atlantic, and read Charley Warner's article with prodigious enjoyment. I think it is exquisite. I think it must be the roundest and broadest and completest short essay he has ever written. It is clear, and compact, and charmingly done.

The hotel grounds join and communicate with the Castle grounds; so we and the children loaf in the winding paths of those leafy vastnesses a great deal, and drink beer and listen to excellent music.

When we first came to this hotel, a couple of weeks ago, I pointed to a house across the river, and said I meant to rent the centre room on the 3d floor for a work-room. Jokingly we got to speaking of it as my office; and amused ourselves with watching "my people" daily in their small grounds and trying to make out what we could of their dress, &c., without a glass. Well, I loafed along there one day and found on that house the only sign of the kind on that side of the river: "Moblirte Wohnung zu Vermiethen!" I went in and rented that very room which I had long ago selected. There was only one other room in the whole double-house unrented.

(It occurs to me that I made a great mistake in not thinking to deliver a very bad German speech, every other sentence pieced out with English, at the Bayard Taylor banquet in New York. I think I could have made it one of the features of the occasion.)[1]

We left Hartford before the end of March, and I have been idle ever since. I have waited for a call to go to work—I knew it would come. Well, it began to come a week ago; my note-book comes out more and more fre-

[1] He used this plan at a gathering of the American students in Heidelberg, on July 4th, with great effect; so his idea was not wasted.

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quently every day since; 3 days ago I concluded to move my manuscript over to my den. *Now* the call is loud and decided at last. So tomorrow I shall begin regular, steady work, and stick to it till middle of July or 1st August, when I look for Twichell; we will then walk about Germany 2 or 3 weeks, and then I'll go to work again—(perhaps in Munich.)

We both send a power of love to the Howellses, and we do wish you were here. Are you in the new house? Tell us about it.

Yrs Ever

MARK.

There has been no former mention in the letters of the coming of Twichell; yet this had been a part of the European plan. Mark Twain had invited his walking companion to make a tramp with him through Europe, as his guest. Material for the new book would grow faster with Twichell as a companion; and these two in spite of their widely opposed views concerning Providence and the general scheme of creation, were wholly congenial comrades. Twichell, in Hartford, expecting to receive the final summons to start, wrote: "Oh, my! do you realize, Mark, what a symposium it is to be? I do. To begin with, I am thoroughly tired, and the rest will be worth everything. To walk with you and talk with you for weeks together—why, it's my dream of luxury."

August 1st brought Twichell, and the friends set out without delay on a tramp through the Black Forest, making short excursions at first, but presently extending them in the direction of Switzerland. Mrs. Clemens and the others remained in Heidelberg, to follow at their leisure. To Mrs. Clemens her husband sent frequent reports of their wanderings. It will be seen that their tramp did not confine itself to pedestrianism, though they did, in fact, walk a great deal, and Mark Twain in a note to his mother declared, "I loathe all travel, except on foot." The reports to Mrs. Clemens follow:

Letters to Mrs. Clemens, in Heidelberg:

ALLERHEILIGEN *Aug. 5, 1878 8:30 p.m.*

Livy darling, we had a rattling good time to-day, but we came very near being left at Baden-Baden, for in-

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stead of waiting in the waiting-room, we sat down on the platform to wait where the trains come in *from the other direction*. We sat there full ten minutes—and then all of a sudden it occurred to me that that was not the right place.

On the train the principal of the big English school at Nauheim (of which Mr. Scheiding was a teacher,) introduced himself to me, and then he mapped out our day for us (for today and tomorrow) and also drew a map and gave us directions how to proceed through Switzerland. He had his entire school with him, taking them on a prodigious trip through Switzerland—tickets for the round trip ten dollars apiece. He has done this annually for 10 years. We took a post carriage from Aachen to Otterhöfen for 7 marks—stopped at the "Pflug" to drink beer, and saw that pretty girl again at a distance. Her father, mother, and two brothers received me like an ancient customer and sat down and talked as long as I had any German left. The big room was full of red-vested farmers (the Gemeindrath of the district, with the Bürgermeister at the head,) drinking beer and talking public business. They had held an election and chosen a new member and had been drinking beer at his expense for several hours. It was intensely Black-foresty.)

There was an Australian there (a student from Stuttgart or somewhere,) and Joe told him who I was and he laid himself out to make our course plain for us—so I am certain we can't get lost between here and Heidelberg.

We walked the carriage road till we came to that place where one sees the foot path on the other side of the ravine, then we crossed over and took that. For a good while we were in a dense forest and judged we were lost, but met 2 native women who said we were all right. We fooled along and got there at 6 p.m.—ate supper, then followed down the ravine to the foot of the falls, then struck into a blind path to see where it would go, and just about dark we fetched up at the Devil's Pulpit on top of the hills. Then home. And now to bed, pretty sleepy. Joe

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sends love and I send a thousand times as much, my darling.

S. L. C.

HOTEL GENNIN.

Livy darling, we had a lovely day—jogged right along, with a good horse and sensible driver—the last two hours right behind an open carriage filled with a pleasant German family—old gentleman and 3 pretty daughters. At table d'hote tonight, 3 dishes were enough for me, and then I bored along tediously through the bill of fare, with a back-ache, not daring to get up and bow to the German family and leave. I meant to sit it through and make *them* get up and do the bowing; but at last Joe took pity on me and said he would get up and drop them a curtsy and put me out of my misery. I was grateful. He got up and delivered a succession of frank and hearty bows, accompanying them with an atmosphere of goodfellowship which would have made even an English family surrender. Of course the Germans responded—then I got right up and they had to respond to my salaams, too. So "*that* was done."

We walked up a gorge and saw a tumbling waterfall which was nothing to Giessbach, but it made me resolve to drop you a line and urge you to go and see Giessbach illuminated. Don't fail—but take a long day's rest, first. I love you, sweetheart.

SAML.

OVER THE GEMMI PASS.

4.30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 24, 1878.

Livy darling, Joe and I have had a most noble day. Started to climb (on foot) at 8.30 this morning among the grandest peaks! Every half hour carried us back a month in the season. We left them harvesting 2d crop of hay. At 9 we were in July and found ripe strawberries; at 9.30 we were in June and gathered flowers belonging to that month; at 10 we were in May and gathered a flower

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which appeared in Heidelberg the 17th of that month; also forget-me-nots, which disappeared from Heidelberg about mid-May; at 11.30 we were in April (by the flowers;) at noon we had rain and hail mixed, and wind and enveloping fogs, and considered it March; at 12.30 we had snowbanks above us and snowbanks below us, and considered it February. Not *good* February, though, because in the midst of the wild desolation the forget-me-not still bloomed, lovely as ever.

What a flower garden the Gemmi Pass is! After I had got my hands full Joe made me a paper bag, which I pinned to my lapel and filled with choice specimens. I gathered no flowers which I had ever gathered before except 4 or 5 kinds. We took it leisurely and I picked all I wanted to. I mailed my harvest to you a while ago. Don't send it to Mrs. Brooks until you have looked it over, flower by flower. It will pay.

Among the clouds and everlasting snows I found a brave and bright little forget-me-not growing in the very midst of a smashed and tumbled stone-debris, just as cheerful as if the barren and awful domes and ramparts that towered around were the blessed walls of heaven. I thought how Lilly Warner would be touched by such a gracious surprise, if she, instead of I, had seen it. So I plucked it, and have mailed it to her with a note.

Our walk was 7 hours—the last 2 down a path as steep as a ladder, almost, cut in the face of a mighty precipice. People are not allowed to ride down it. This part of the day's work taxed our knees, I tell you. We have been loafing about this village (Leukerbad) for an hour, now —we stay here over Sunday. Not tired at all. (Joe's hat fell over the precipice—so he came here bareheaded.) I love you, my darling. SAML.

ST. NICHOLAS, *Aug. 26th, '78.*

Livy darling, we came through a-whooping today, 6 hours tramp up steep hills and down steep hills, in mud

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and water shoe-deep, and in a steady pouring rain which never moderated a moment. I was as chipper and fresh as a lark all the way and arrived without the slightest sense of fatigue. But we were soaked and my shoes full of water, so we ate at once, stripped and went to bed for 2½ hours while our traps were thoroughly dried, and our boots *greased* in addition. Then we put our clothes on *hot* and went to table d'hote.

Made some nice English friends and shall see them at Zermatt tomorrow.

Gathered a small bouquet of new flowers, but they got spoiled. I sent you a safety-match box full of flowers last night from Leukerbad.

I have just telegraphed you to wire the family news to me at Riffel tomorrow. I do hope you are all well and having as jolly a time as we are, for I love you, sweetheart, and also, in a measure, the Bays.[1] Give my love to Clara Spaulding and also to the cubs.

SAML.

This, as far as it goes, is a truer and better account of the excursion than Mark Twain gave in the book that he wrote later. *A Tramp Abroad* has a quality of burlesque in it, which did not belong to the journey at all, but was invented to satisfy the craving for what the public conceived to be Mark Twain's humor. The serious portions of the book are much more pleasing—more like himself. Perhaps the reader will be interested in following the exact route of the "tramps." The appended itinerary, kept by Twichell, gives the dates and various methods of travel. One could doubtless figure, if sufficiently interested, about what percentage of the tour was made on foot. The entire journey, as will be seen, lasted one week more than a month.

ITINERARY, 1878

Aug. 2. Joined M. T. and family at Baden-Baden.
Aug. 5. By rail to Aachen; by carriage to Ottenhofen; on foot to Allerheiligen.
Aug. 6. Walked to Appenau; by rail to Heidelberg.

[1] Little Susy's word for "babies."

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Aug. 8. Carriage via Wimpffen to Heilbronn.
Aug. 9. By small boat, on the Neckar, to Jâgsfeldt, to Hirschorn.
Aug. 10. Carriage to Neckar; Genunde by rail to Heidelberg—to Baden-Baden.
Aug. 12. To Luzerne (probably by rail).
Aug. 15–16. Rigi (a climb).
Aug. 21. Carriage to Interlaken.
Aug. 23 Carriage to Kandersteg.
Aug. 24. Walked over Gemmi Pass to Leukerbad.
Aug. 26. Carriage to Leuk R. R. station; rail to Vispach; on foot to St. Niklaus.
Aug. 27. Walked to Zermatt.
Aug. 28. Gorner Grat (slept at Riffel Inn).
Aug. 29. Zermatt.
Aug. 30. Wagon to St. Niklaus; walked to Viso.
Aug. 31. By rail and boat to Lausanne.
Sept. 2. Castle of Chillon (probably walked).
Sept. 4. By rail to Martigny.
Sept. 5. Walked, via Tête Noir to Argentère; by wagon to Chamonix.
Sept. 7. By diligence to Geneva.
Sept. 9. J. H. T. says good-by and departs for Paris and London.

Twichell also made his reports home, some of which give us interesting pictures of his walking partner. In one place he wrote: "Mark is a queer fellow. There is nothing he so delights in as a swift, strong stream. You can hardly get him to leave one when once he is within the influence of its fascinations."

Twichell tells how at Kandersteg they were out together one evening where a brook comes plunging down from Gasternthal and how he pushed in a drift to see it go racing along the current. "When I got back to the path Mark was running down stream after it as hard as he could go, throwing up his hands and shouting in the wildest ecstasy, and when a piece went over a fall and emerged to view in the foam below he would jump up and down and yell. He said afterward that he had not been so excited in three months."

In other places Twichell refers to his companion's consideration for the feeling of others, and for animals. "When we are

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driving, his concern is all about the horse. He can't bear to see the whip used, or to see a horse pull hard."

After the walk over Gemmi Pass he wrote: "Mark to-day was immensely absorbed in flowers. He scrambled around and gathered a great variety, and manifested the intensest pleasure in them. He crowded a pocket of his note-book with his specimens, and wanted more room."

Whereupon Twichell got out his needle and thread and some stiff paper he had and contrived the little paper bag to hang to the front of his vest.

The tramp really ended at Lausanne, where Clemens joined his party, but a short excursion to Chillon and Chamonix followed, the travelers finally separating at Geneva, Twichell to set out for home by way of England, Clemens to remain and try to write the story of their travels. He hurried a good-by letter after his comrade:

To Rev. J. H. Twichell:

(*No date*)

DEAR OLD JOE,—It is actually all over! I was so low-spirited at the station yesterday, and this morning, when I woke, I couldn't seem to accept the dismal truth that you were really gone, and the pleasant tramping and talking at an end. Ah, my boy! it has been such a rich holiday to me, and I feel under such deep and honest obligations to you for coming. I am putting out of my mind all memory of the times when I misbehaved toward you and hurt you: I am resolved to consider it forgiven, and to store up and remember only the charming hours of the journeys and the times when I was not unworthy to be with you and share a companionship which to me stands first after Livy's. It is justifiable to do this; for why should I let my small infirmities of disposition live and grovel among my mental pictures of the eternal sublimities of the Alps?

Livy can't accept or endure the fact that you are gone. But you *are*, and we cannot get around it. So take our love with you, and bear it also over the sea to Harmony, and God bless you both. MARK.

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From Switzerland the Clemens party worked down into Italy, sight-seeing, a diversion in which Mark Twain found little enough of interest. He had seen most of the sights ten years before, when his mind was fresh. He unburdened himself to Twichell and to Howells, after a period of suffering.

To J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:

ROME, *Nov. 3, '78.*

DEAR JOE,— . . . I have received your several letters, and we have prodigiously enjoyed them. How I do admire a man who can sit down and whale away with a pen just the same as if it was fishing—or something else as full of pleasure and as void of labor. *I* can't do it; else, in common decency, I *would* when I write to *you*. Joe, if I can make a book out of the matter gathered in your company over here, the book is safe; but I don't think I have gathered any matter before or since your visit worth writing up. I do wish you were in Rome to do my sight-seeing for me. Rome interests me as much as East Hartford could, and no more. That is, the Rome which the average tourist feels an interest in; but there are other things here which stir me enough to make life worth living. Livy and Clara Spaulding are having a royal time worshiping the old Masters, and I as good a time gritting my ineffectual teeth over them.

A friend waits for me. A power of love to you all. Amen.

MARK.

In his letter to Howells he said: "I wish I *could* give those sharp satires on European life which you mention, but of course a man can't write successful satire except he be in a calm, judicial good-humor; whereas I *hate* travel, and I *hate* hotels, and I *hate* the opera, and I *hate* the old masters. In truth, I don't ever seem to be in a good-enough humor with anything to satirize it. No, I want to stand up before it and curse it and foam at the mouth, or take a club and pound it to rags and pulp. I have got in two or three chapters about Wagner's

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operas, and managed to do it without showing temper, but the strain of another such effort would burst me!"

From Italy the Clemens party went to Munich, where they had arranged in advance for winter quarters. Clemens claims, in his report of the matter to Howells, that he took the party through without the aid of a courier, though thirty years later, in some comment which he set down on being shown the letter, he wrote concerning this paragraph: "Probably a lie." He wrote, also, that they acquired a great affection for Fräulein Dahlweiner: "Acquired it at once and it outlasted the winter we spent in her house."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

No 1 a, Karlstrasse, 2 e Stock.
Care Fraulein Dahlweiner.
MUNICH, *Nov. 17, 1878.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—We arrived here night before last, pretty well fagged: an 8-hour pull from Rome to Florence; a rest there of a day and two nights; then 5½ hours to Bologna; one night's rest; then from noon to 10:30 p.m. carried us to Trent, in the Austrian Tyrol, where the confounded hotel had not received our message, and so at that miserable hour, in that snowy region, the tribe had to shiver together in fireless rooms while beds were prepared and warmed, then up at 6 in the morning and a noble view of snow-peaks glittering in the rich light of a full moon while the hotel-devils lazily deranged a breakfast for us in the dreary gloom of blinking candles; then a solid 12 hours pull through the loveliest snow-ranges and snow-draped forest—and at 7 p.m. we hauled up, in drizzle and fog, at the domicile which had been engaged for us ten months before. Munich did seem the horriblest place, the most desolate place, the most unendurable place!—and the rooms were *so* small, the conveniences so meagre, and the porcelain stoves so grim, ghastly, dismal, intolerable! So Livy and Clara (Spaulding) sat down forlorn, and cried, and I retired to a private

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place to pray. By and by we all retired to our narrow German beds; and when Livy and I finished talking across the room, it was all decided that we would rest 24 hours then pay whatever damages were required, and straightway fly to the south of France.

But you see, that was simply fatigue. Next morning the tribe fell in love with the rooms, with the weather, with Munich, and head over heels in love with Fraulein Dahlweiner. We got a larger parlor—an ample one—threw two communicating bedrooms into one, for the children, and now we are entirely comfortable. The only apprehension, at present, is that the climate may not be just right for the children, in which case we shall *have* to go to France, but it will be with the sincerest regret.

Now *I* brought the tribe through from Rome, myself. We never had so little trouble before. The next time anybody has a courier to put out to nurse, I shall not be in the market.

Last night the forlornities had all disappeared; so we gathered around the lamp, after supper, with our beer and my pipe, and in a condition of grateful snugness tackled the new magazines. I read your new story aloud, amid thunders of applause, and we all agreed that Captain Jenness and the old man with the accordion-hat are lovely people and most skilfully drawn—and that cabin-boy, too, we like. Of course we are all glad the girl is gone to Venice—for there is no place like Venice. Now I easily understand that the old man couldn't go, because you have a purpose in sending Lyddy by herself: but you could send the old man over in another ship, and we particularly want him along. Suppose you *don't* need him there? What of that? Can't you let him feed the doves? Can't you let him fall in the canal occasionally? Can't you let his good-natured purse be a daily prey to guides and beggar-boys? Can't you let him find peace and rest and fellowship under Pere Jacopo's kindly wing? (However, you are writing the book, not I—still, I am one of the people you are writing it *for*, you understand.) I only

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want to insist, in a friendly way, that the old man shall shed his sweet influence frequently upon the page—that is all.

The first time we called at the convent, Pere Jacopo was absent; the next (Just at this moment Miss Spaulding spoke up and said something about Pere Jacopo—there is more in this acting of one mind upon another than people think) time, he was there, and gave us preserved rose-leaves to eat, and talked about you, and Mrs. Howells, and Winnie, and brought out his photographs, and showed us a picture of "the library of your new house," but not so—it was the study in your Cambridge house. He was very sweet and good. He called on us next day; the day after that we left Venice, after a pleasant sojourn of 3 or 4 weeks. He expects to spend this winter in Munich and will see us often, he said.

Pretty soon, I am going to write something, and when I finish it I shall know whether to put it to itself or in the "Contributors' Club." That "Contributors' Club" was a most happy idea. By the way, *I* think that the man who wrote the paragraph beginning at the bottom of page 643 has said a mighty sound and sensible thing. I wish his suggestion could be adopted.

It is lovely of you to keep that old pipe in such a place of honor.

While it occurs to me, I must tell you Susie's last. She is sorely badgered with dreams; and her stock dream is that she is being eaten up by bears. She is a grave and thoughtful child, as you will remember. Last night she had the usual dream. This morning she stood apart (after telling it,) for some time, looking vacantly at the floor, and absorbed in meditation. At last she looked up, and with the pathos of one who feels he has not been dealt by with even-handed fairness, said "But Mamma, the trouble is, that I am never the *bear*, but always the person."

It would not have occurred to me that there might be an advantage, even in a dream, in occasionally being the

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eater, instead of always the party eaten, but I easily perceived that her point was well taken.

I'm sending to Heidelberg for your letter and Winnie's, and I do hope they haven't been lost.

My wife and I send love to you all.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

The Howells story, running at this time in the *Atlantic*, and so much enjoyed by the Clemens party, was "The Lady of the Aroostook." The suggestions made for enlarging the part of the "old man" are eminently characteristic.

Mark Twain's forty-third birthday came in Munich, and in his letter conveying this fact to his mother we get a brief added outline of the daily life in that old Bavarian city. Certainly, it would seem to have been a quieter and more profitable existence than he had known amid the confusion of things left behind in America.

To Mrs. Jane Clemens and Mrs. Moffett, in America:

No 1 a Karlstrasse,

Dec. 1, MUNICH. *1878.*

MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTER,—I broke the back of life yesterday and started down-hill toward old age. This fact has not produced any effect upon me that I can detect.

I suppose we are located here for the winter. I have a pleasant work-room a mile from here where I do my writing. The walk to and from that place gives me what exercise I need, and all I take. We staid three weeks in Venice, a week in Florence, a fortnight in Rome, and arrived here a couple of weeks ago. Livy and Miss Spaulding are studying drawing and German, and the children have a German day-governess. I cannot see but that the children speak German as well as they do English.

Susie often translates Livy's orders to the servants. I cannot work and study German at the same time; so

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I have dropped the latter, and do not even read the language, except in the morning paper to get the news.

We have all pretty good health, latterly, and have seldom had to call the doctor.—The children have been in the open air pretty constantly for months now. In Venice they were on the water in the gondola most of the time, and were great friends with our gondolier; and in Rome and Florence they had long daily tramps, for Rosa is a famous hand to smell out the sights of a strange place. Here they wander less extensively.

The family all join in love to you all and to Orion and Mollie.

Affly Your son

SAM.

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XIX

LETTERS 1879. RETURN TO AMERICA. THE GREAT GRANT REUNION

LIFE went on very well in Munich. Each day the family fell more in love with Fräulein Dahlweiner and her house. Mark Twain, however, did not settle down to his work readily. His "pleasant work-room" provided exercise, but no inspiration. When he discovered he could not find his Swiss note-book he was ready to give up his travel-writing altogether. In the letter that follows we find him much less enthusiastic concerning his own performances than over the story by Howells, which he was following in the *Atlantic*.

The "detective" chapter mentioned in this letter was not included in *A Tramp Abroad*. It was published separately, as *The Stolen White Elephant* in a volume bearing that title. The play, which he had now found "dreadfully witless and flat," was no other than "Simon Wheeler, Detective," which he had once regarded so highly. The "Stewart" referred to was the millionaire merchant, A. T. Stewart, whose body was stolen in the expectation of reward.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

MUNICH, *Jan. 21, (1879)*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—It's no use,—your letter miscarried in some way and is lost. The consul has made a thorough search and says he has not been able to trace it. It is unaccountable, for all the letters I did *not* want arrived without a single grateful failure. Well, I have read-up, now, as far as you have got,—that is, to where there's a storm at sea approaching,—and we three think you are clear out-Howellsing Howells. If your literature has not

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struck perfection now we are not able to see what is lacking. It is all such truth—truth to the life; everywhere your pen falls it leaves a photograph. I did imagine that everything had been said about life at sea that could be said,—but no matter, it was all a failure and lies, nothing but lies with a thin varnish of fact,—only *you* have stated it as it absolutely *is*. And only you see people and their ways, and their insides and outsides as they *are*, and make them talk as they *do* talk. I think you are the very greatest artist in these tremendous mysteries that ever lived. There doesn't seem to be anything that can be concealed from your awful all-seeing eye. It must be a cheerful thing for one to live with you and be aware that you are going up and down in him like another conscience all the time. Possibly you will not be a fully accepted classic until you have been dead a hundred years,—it is the fate of the Shakespeares and of all genuine prophets,—but then your books will be as common as Bibles, *I* believe. You're not a weed, but an oak; not a summer-house, but a cathedral. In that day *I* shall still be in the Cyclopedias, too,—thus: "Mark Twain; history and occupation unknown—but he was personally acquainted with Howells." There—I could sing your praises all day, and feel and believe every bit of it.

My book is half finished; I wish to heaven it was done. I have given up writing a detective novel—can't write a novel, for I lack the faculty; but when the detectives were nosing around after Stewart's loud remains, I threw a chapter into my present book in which I have very extravagantly burlesqued the detective business—if it *is* possible to burlesque that business extravagantly. You know I was going to send you that detective play, so that you could re-write it. Well I didn't do it because I couldn't find a single idea in it that could be useful to you. It was dreadfully witless and flat. I knew it would sadden you and unfit you for work.

I have always been sorry we threw up that play embodying Orion which you began. It was a mistake to

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do that. Do keep that MS and tackle it again. It will work out all right; you will see. I don't believe that that character exists in literature in so well-developed a condition as it exists in Orion's person. Now won't you put Orion in a *story?* Then he will go handsomely into a play afterwards. How deliciously you could paint him—it would make fascinating reading—the sort that makes a reader laugh and cry at the same time, for Orion is as good and ridiculous a soul as ever was.

Ah, to think of Bayard Taylor! It is too sad to talk about. I was so glad there was not a single sting and so many good praiseful words in the Atlantic's criticism of Deukalion.

Love to you all

Yrs Ever

MARK.

We remain here till middle of March.

In *A Tramp Abroad* there is an incident in which the author describes himself as hunting for a lost sock in the dark, in a vast hotel bedroom at Heilbronn. The account of the real incident, as written to Twichell, seems even more amusing.

The "Yarn About the Limburger Cheese and the Box of Guns," like "The Stolen White Elephant," did not find place in the travel-book, but was published in the same volume with the elephant story, added to the rambling notes of "An Idle Excursion."

With the discovery of the Swiss note-book, work with Mark Twain was going better. His letter reflects his enthusiasm.

To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:

MUNICH, *Jan 26 '79.*

DEAR OLD JOE,—Sunday. Your delicious letter arrived exactly at the right time. It was laid by my plate as I was finishing breakfast at 12 noon. Livy and Clara (Spaulding) arrived from church 5 minutes later; I took a pipe and spread myself out on the sofa, and Livy sat by and read, and I warmed to that butcher the moment

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he began to swear. There is more than one way of praying, and I like the butcher's way because the petitioner is so apt to be in earnest. I was peculiarly alive to his performance just at this time, for another reason, to wit: Last night I awoke at 3 this morning, and after raging to myself for 2 interminable hours, I gave it up. I rose, assumed a catlike stealthiness, to keep from waking Livy, and proceeded to dress in the pitch dark. Slowly but surely I got on garment after garment—all down to one sock; I had one slipper on and the other in my hand. Well, on my hands and knees I crept softly around, pawing and feeling and scooping along the carpet, and among chair-legs for that missing sock; I kept that up;—and still kept it up and *kept* it up. At first I only said to myself, "Blame that sock," but that soon ceased to answer; my expletives grew steadily stronger and stronger,—and at last, when I found I was *lost*, I had to sit flat down on the floor and take hold of something to keep from lifting the roof off with the profane explosion that was trying to get out of me. I could see the dim blur of the window, but of course it was in the wrong place and could give me no information as to where I was. But I had one comfort —I had not waked Livy; I believed I could find that sock in silence if the night lasted long enough. So I started again and softly pawed all over the place,—and sure enough at the end of half an hour I laid my hand on the missing article. I rose joyfully up and butted the wash-bowl and pitcher off the stand and simply raised ——so to speak. Livy screamed, then said, "Who is that? what *is* the matter?" I said "There ain't anything the matter—I'm hunting for my sock." She said, "Are you hunting for it with a club?"

I went in the parlor and lit the lamp, and gradually the fury subsided and the ridiculous features of the thing began to suggest themselves. So I lay on the sofa, with note-book and pencil, and transferred the adventure to our big room in the hotel at Heilbronn, and got it on paper a good deal to my satisfaction.

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I found the Swiss note-book, some time ago. When it was first lost I was glad of it, for I was getting an idea that I had lost my faculty of writing sketches of travel; therefore the loss of that note-book would render the writing of this one simply impossible, and let me gracefully out; I was about to write to Bliss and propose some other book, when the confounded thing turned up, and down went my heart into my boots. But there was now no excuse, so I went solidly to work—tore up a great part of the MS written in Heidelberg,—wrote and tore up,—continued to write and tear up,—and at last, reward of patient and noble persistence, my pen got the old swing again!

Since then I'm glad Providence knew better what to do with the Swiss note-book than I did, for I like my work, now, exceedingly, and often turn out over 30 MS pages a day and then quit sorry that Heaven makes the days so short.

One of my discouragements had been the belief that my interest in this tour had been so slender that I couldn't gouge matter enough out of it to make a book. What a mistake. I've got 900 pages written (not a word in it about the sea voyage) yet I stepped my foot out of Heidelberg for the first time yesterday,—and then only to take our party of four on our first pedestrian tour—to Heilbronn. I've got them dressed elaborately in walking costume—knapsacks, canteens, field-glasses, leather leggings, patent walking shoes, muslin folds around their hats, with long tails hanging down behind, sun umbrellas, and *Alpenstocks*. They go all the way to Wimpfen by rail—thence to Heilbronn in a chance vegetable cart drawn by a donkey and a cow; I shall fetch them home on a raft; and if other people shall perceive that that was no pedestrian excursion, they *themselves* shall not be conscious of it.—This trip will take 100 pages or more,—oh, goodness knows how many! for the mood is everything, not the material, and I already seem to see 300 pages rising before me on that trip. Then, I propose to leave Heidel-

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berg for good. Don't you see, the book (1800 MS pages,) may really be finished before I ever get to Switzerland?

But there's one thing; I want to tell Frank Bliss and his father to be charitable toward me in,—that is, let me tear up all the MS I want to, and give me time to write more. I shan't waste the time—I haven't the slightest desire to loaf, but a consuming desire to work, ever since I got back my swing. And you see this book is either going to be compared with the Innocents Abroad, or *contrasted* with it, to my disadvantage. I think I can make a book that will be no dead corpse of a thing and I mean to do my level best to accomplish that.

My crude plans are crystalizing. As the thing stands now, I went to Europe for *three* purposes. The first you *know*, and must keep secret, even from the Blisses; the second is to study *Art;* and the third to acquire a critical knowledge of the German language. My MS already shows that the two latter objects are accomplished. It shows that I am moving about as an Artist and a Philologist, and unaware that there is any immodesty in assuming these titles. Having three definite objects has had the effect of seeming to enlarge my domain and give me the freedom of a loose costume. It is three strings to my bow, too.

Well, your butcher is magnificent. He won't stay out of my mind.—I keep trying to think of some way of getting your account of him into my book without his being offended—and yet confound him there isn't anything you have said which *he* would see any offense in, —I'm only thinking of his friends—*they* are the parties who busy themselves with seeing things for people. But I'm bound to have him in. I'm putting in the yarn about the Limburger cheese and the box of guns, too—mighty glad Howells declined it. It seems to gather richness and flavor with age. I have very nearly killed several companies with that narrative,—the American Artists' Club, here, for instance, and Smith and wife and Miss Griffith (they were here in this house a week or two.) I've got 3

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other chapters that pretty nearly destroyed the same parties, too.—

O, Switzerland! the further it recedes into the enriching haze of time, the more intolerably delicious the charm of it and the cheer of it and the glory and majesty and solemnity and pathos of it grow. Those mountains had a soul; they thought; they spoke,—one couldn't hear it with the ears of the body, but what a voice it was!—and how real. Deep down in my memory it is sounding yet. Alp calleth unto Alp!—that stately old Scriptural wording is the right one for God's Alps and God's ocean. How puny we were in that awful presence—and how painless it was to be so; how fitting and right it seemed, and how stingless was the sense of our unspeakable insignificance. And Lord how pervading were the repose and peace and blessedness that poured out of the heart of the invisible Great Spirit of the Mountains.

Now what *is* it? There are mountains and mountains and mountains in this world—but only these take you by the heart-strings. I wonder what the secret of it is. Well, time and time again it has seemed to me that I *must* drop everything and flee to Switzerland once more. It is a *longing*—a deep, strong, tugging *longing*—that is the word. We must go again, Joe.—October days, let us get up at dawn and breakfast at the tower. I should like that first rate.

Livy and all of us send deluges of love to you and Harmony and all the children. I dreamed last night that I woke up in the library at home and your children were frolicing around me and Julia was sitting in my lap; you and Harmony and both families of Warners had finished their welcomes and were filing out through the conservatory door, wrecking Patrick's flower pots with their dress skirts as they went. Peace and plenty abide with you all!

MARK.

I want the Blisses to know their part of this letter, if possible. They will see that my delay was not from choice.

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Following the life of Mark Twain, whether through his letters or along the sequence of detailed occurrence, we are never more than a little while, or a little distance, from his brother Orion. In one form or another Orion is ever present, his inquiries, his proposals, his suggestions, his plans for improving his own fortunes, command our attention. He was one of the most human creatures that ever lived; indeed, his humanity excluded every form of artificiality—everything that needs to be acquired. Talented, trusting, child-like, carried away by the impulse of the moment, despite a keen sense of humor he was never able to see that his latest plan or project was not bound to succeed. Mark Twain loved him, pitied him—also enjoyed him, especially with Howells. Orion's new plan to lecture in the interest of religion found its way to Munich, with the following result:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

MUNICH, *Feb. 9.* (*1879*)

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I have just received this letter from Orion—take care of it, for it is worth preserving. I got as far as 9 pages in my answer to it, when Mrs. Clemens shut down on it, and said it was cruel, and made me send the money and simply wish his lecture success. I said I couldn't lose my 9 pages—so she said send them to you. But I will acknowledge that I thought I was writing a very kind letter.

Now just look at this letter of Orion's. Did you ever see the grotesquely absurd and the heart-breakingly pathetic more closely joined together? Mrs. Clemens said "Raise his monthly pension." So I wrote to Perkins to raise it a trifle.

Now only think of it! He still has 100 pages to write on his lecture, yet in one inking of his pen he has already swooped around the United States and invested the result!

You *must* put him in a book or a play right away. You are the only man capable of doing it. You might die at any moment, and your very greatest work would be lost to the world. *I* could write Orion's simple biography, and make it effective, too, by merely stating the bald

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facts—and this I will do if he dies before I do; but *you* must put him into romance. This was the understanding you and I had the day I sailed.

Observe Orion's career—that is, a *little* of it: (1) He has belonged to as many as five different religious denominations; last March he withdrew from the deaconship in a Congregational Church and the Superintendency of its Sunday School, in a speech in which he said that for many months (it runs in my mind that he said 13 years,) he had been a confirmed *infidel*, and so felt it to be his duty to retire from the flock.

2. After being a republican for years, he wanted me to buy him a democratic newspaper. A few days before the Presidential election, he came out in a speech and publicly went over to the democrats; he prudently "hedged" by voting for 6 state republicans, also.

The new convert was made one of the secretaries of the democratic meeting, and placed in the list of speakers. He wrote me jubilantly of what a ten-strike he was going to make with that speech. All right—but think of his innocent and pathetic candor in writing me something like this, a week later:

"I was more diffident than I had expected to be, and this was increased by the silence with which I was received when I came forward; so I seemed unable to get the fire into my speech which I had calculated upon, and presently they began to get up and go out; and in a few minutes they all rose up and went away."

How *could* a man uncover such a sore as that and show it to another? Not a word of complaint, you see—only a patient, sad surprise.

3. His next project was to write a burlesque upon Paradise Lost.

4. Then, learning that the Times was paying Harte $100 a column for stories, he concluded to write some for the same price. I read his first one and persuaded him not to write any more.

5. Then he read proof on the N. Y. Eve. Post at $10

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a week and meekly observed that the foreman swore at him and ordered him around "like a steamboat mate."

6. Being discharged from that post, he wanted to try agriculture—was sure he could make a fortune out of a chicken farm. I gave him $900 and he went to a ten-house village 2 miles above Keokuk on the river bank—this place was a railway station. He soon asked for money to buy a horse and light wagon,—because the trains did not run at church time on Sunday and his wife found it rather far to walk.

For a long time I answered demands for "loans" and by next mail always received his check for the interest due me to date. In the most guileless way he let it leak out that he did not underestimate the value of his custom to me, since it was not likely that any other customer of mine paid his interest *quarterly*, and this enabled me to use my capital twice in 6 months instead of only once. But alas, when the debt at last reached $1800 or $2500 (I have forgotten which) the interest ate too formidably into his borrowings, and so he quietly ceased to pay it or speak of it. At the end of two years I found that the chicken farm had long ago been abandoned, and he had moved into Keokuk. Later in one of his casual moments, he observed that there was no money in fattening a chicken on 65 cents worth of corn and then selling it for 50.

7. Finally, if I would lend him $500 a year for two years, (this was 4 or 5 years ago,) he *knew* he could make a success as a lawyer, and would prove it. This is the pension which we have just increased to $600. The first year his legal business brought him $5. It also brought him an unremunerative case where some villains were trying to chouse some negro orphans out of $700. He still has this case. He has waggled it around through various courts and made some booming speeches on it. The negro children have grown up and married off, now, I believe, and their litigated town-lot has been dug up and carted off by somebody—but Orion still infests the courts with his documents and makes the welkin ring with his

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venerable case. The second year, he didn't make anything. The third he made $6, and I made Bliss put a case in his hands—about half an hour's work. Orion charged $50 for it—Bliss paid him $15. Thus four or five years of lawing has brought him $26, but this will doubtless be increased when he gets done lecturing and buys that "law library." Meantime his office rent has been $60 a year, and he has stuck to that lair day by day as patiently as a spider.

8. Then he by and by conceived the idea of lecturing around America as "Mark Twain's Brother"—that to be on the bills. Subject of proposed lecture, "On the Formation of Character."

9. I protested, and he got on his warpaint, couched his lance, and ran a bold tilt against total abstinence and the Red Ribbon fanatics. It raised a fine row among the virtuous Keokukians.

10. I wrote to encourage him in his good work, but I had let a mail intervene; so by the time my letter reached him he was already winning laurels as a Red Ribbon Howler.

11. Afterward he took a rabid part in a prayer-meeting epidemic; dropped that to travesty Jules Verne; dropped that, in the middle of the last chapter, last March, to digest the matter of an infidel book which he proposed to write; and now he comes to the surface to rescue our "noble and beautiful religion" from the sacrilegious talons of Bob Ingersoll.

Now come! Don't fool away this treasure which Providence has laid at your feet, but take it up and use it. One can let his imagination run riot in portraying Orion, for there is nothing so extravagant as to be out of character with him.

Well—good-bye, and a short life and a merry one be yours. Poor old Methusaleh, how did he manage to stand it so long?

Yrs ever,

MARK.

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To Orion Clemens

(Unsent and inclosed with the foregoing, to W. D. Howells):

MUNICH, *Feb. 9, (1879)*

MY DEAR BRO.,—Yours has just arrived. I enclose a draft on Hartford for $25. You will have abandoned the project you wanted it for, by the time it arrives,—but no matter, apply it to your newer and present project, whatever it is. You see I have an ineradicable faith in your unsteadfastness,—but mind you, *I* didn't invent that faith, you conferred it on me yourself. But fire away, fire away! I don't see why a changeable man shouldn't get as much enjoyment out of his changes, and transformations and transfigurations as a steadfast man gets out of standing still and pegging at the same old monotonous thing all the time. That is to say, I don't see why a kaleidoscope shouldn't enjoy itself as much as a telescope, nor a grindstone have as good a time as a whetstone, nor a barometer as good a time as a yardstick. I don't feel like girding at you any more about fickleness of purpose, because I recognize and realize at last that it is incurable; but before I learned to accept this truth, each new weekly project of yours possessed the power of throwing me into the most exhausting and helpless convulsions of profanity. But fire away, now! Your magic has lost its might. I am able to view your inspirations dispassionately and judicially, now, and say "This one or that one or the other one is not up to your average flight, or is above it, or below it."

And so, without passion, or prejudice, or bias of any kind, I sit in judgment upon your lecture project, and say it was up to your average, it was indeed above it, for it had possibilities in it, and even *practical* ones. While I was not sorry you abandoned it, I should not be sorry if you had stuck to it and given it a trial. But on the whole you did the wise thing to lay it aside, I think, because a lecture is a most easy thing to fail in; and at your

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time of life, and in your own town, such a failure would make a deep and cruel wound in your heart and in your pride. It was decidedly unwise in you to think for a moment of coming before a community who knew you, with such a course of lectures; because Keokuk is not unaware that you have been a Swedenborgian, a Presbyterian, a Congregationalist, and a Methodist (on probation), and that just a year ago you were an infidel. If Keokuk had gone to your lecture course, it would have gone to be amused, not instructed,—for when a man is known to have no settled convictions of his own he can't convince other people. They would have gone to be amused and that would have been a deep humiliation to you. It could have been safe for you to appear only where you were unknown—then many of your hearers would think you were in earnest. And they would be right. You *are* in earnest while your convictions are new. But taking it by and large, you probably did best to discard that project altogether. But I leave you to judge of that, for you are the worst judge I know of.

(Unfinished.)

That Mark Twain in many ways was hardly less child-like than his brother is now and again revealed in his letters. He was of steadfast purpose, and he possessed the driving power which Orion Clemens lacked; but the importance to him of some of the smaller matters of life, as shown in a letter like the following, bespeaks a certain simplicity of nature which he never outgrew:

To Rev. J. H. Twichell, in Hartford:

MUNICH, *Feb. 24.* (*79*)

DEAR OLD JOE,—It was a mighty good letter, Joe—and that idea of yours is a rattling good one. But I have not sot down here to answer your letter,—for it is down at my study,—but only to impart some information.

For 2 months I had not shaved without crying. I'd

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spend ¾ of an hour whetting away on my hand—no use, couldn't get an edge. Tried a razor strop—same result. So I sat down and put in an hour thinking out the mystery. Then it seemed plain—to wit: my hand can't *give* a razor an edge, it can only smooth and refine an edge that has already been given. I judge that a razor fresh from the hone is this shape V—the long point being the continuation of the edge—and that after much use the shape is this V—the attenuated edge all worn off and gone. By George I *knew* that was the explanation. And I knew that a freshly honed and freshly strapped razor won't cut, but after strapping on the hand as a final operation, it *will* cut.—So I sent out for an oil-stone; none to be had, but messenger brought back a little piece of rock the size of a Safety-match box—(it was bought in a shoemaker's shop) bad flaw in middle of it, too,—but I put 4 drops of fine Olive oil on it, picked out the razor marked "Thursday" because it was never any account and would be no loss if I spoiled it—gave it a brisk and reckless honing for 10 minutes, then tried it on a hair—it wouldn't cut. Then I trotted it through a vigorous 10-minute course on a razor-strop and tried it on a hair—it wouldn't cut —tried it on my face—it made me cry—gave it a 5-minute stropping on my hand, and my land, what an edge she had! We thought we knew what sharp razors were when we were tramping in Switzerland, but it was a mistake —they were dull beside this old Thursday razor of mine —which I mean to name Thursday October Christian, in gratitude. I took my whetstone, and in 20 minutes I put two more of my razors in splendid condition—but I leave them in the box—I never use any but Thursday O. C., and shan't till its edge is gone—and then I'll know how to restore it without any delay.

We all go to Paris next Thursday—address, Monroe & Co., Bankers.

With love—

Ys Ever

MARK.

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In Paris they found pleasant quarters at the Hotel Normandy, but it was a chilly, rainy spring, and the travelers gained a rather poor impression of the French capital. Mark Twain's work did not go well, at first, because of the noises of the street. But then he found a quieter corner in the hotel and made better progress. In a brief note to Aldrich he said: "I sleep like a lamb and write like a lion—I mean the kind of a lion that writes—if any such." He expected to finish the book in six weeks; that is to say, before returning to America. He was looking after its illustrations himself, and a letter to Frank Bliss, of The American Publishing Company, refers to the frontispiece, which, from time to time, has caused question as to its origin. To Bliss he says: "It is a thing which I *manufactured* by pasting a popular comic picture into the middle of a celebrated Biblical one—shall attribute it to Titian. It needs to be engraved by a master."

The weather continued bad in France and they left there in July to find it little better in England. They had planned a journey to Scotland to visit Doctor Brown, whose health was not very good. In after years Mark Twain blamed himself harshly for not making the trip, which he declared would have meant so much to Mrs. Clemens. He had forgotten by that time the real reasons for not going—the continued storms and uncertainty of trains (which made it barely possible for them to reach Liverpool in time for their sailing-date), and with characteristic self-reproach vowed that only perversity and obstinacy on his part had prevented the journey to Scotland. From Liverpool, on the eve of sailing, he sent Doctor Brown a good-by word.

To Dr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:

WASHINGTON HOTEL, LIME STREET, LIVERPOOL.
Aug. 21 (1879)

MY DEAR MR. BROWN,—During all the 15 months we have been spending on the continent, we have been promising ourselves a sight of you as our latest and most prized delight in a foreign land—but our hope has failed, our plan has miscarried. One obstruction after another intruded itself, and our short sojourn of three or four weeks on English soil was thus frittered gradually away,

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and we were at last obliged to give up the idea of seeing you at all. It is a great disappointment, for we wanted to show you how much "Megalopis" has grown (she is 7 now) and what a fine creature her sister is, and how prettily they both speak German. There are six persons in my party, and they are as difficult to cart around as nearly any other menagerie would be. My wife and Miss Spaulding are along, and you may imagine how they take to heart this failure of our long promised Edinburgh trip. We never even wrote you, because we were always so sure, from day to day, that our affairs would finally so shape themselves as to let us get to Scotland. But no, —everything went wrong—we had only flying trips here and there in place of the leisurely ones which we had planned.

We arrived in Liverpool an hour ago very tired, and have halted at this hotel (by the advice of misguided friends)—and if my instinct and experience are worth anything, it is the very worst hotel on earth, without any exception. We shall move to another hotel early in the morning to spend to-morrow. We sail for America next day in the "Gallia."

We all join in the sincerest love to you, and in the kindest remembrance to "Jock" [1] and your sister.

Truly yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

It was September 3, 1879, that Mark Twain returned to America by the steamer *Gallia*. In the seventeen months of his absence he had taken on a "traveled look" and had added gray hairs. A New York paper said of his arrival that he looked older than when he went to Germany, and that his hair had turned quite gray.

Mark Twain had not finished his book of travel in Paris—in fact, it seemed to him far from complete—and he settled down rather grimly to work on it at Quarry Farm. When, after a few days no word of greeting came from Howells, Clemens

[1] Son of Doctor Brown.

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wrote to ask if he were dead or only sleeping. Howells hastily sent a line to say that he had been sleeping "The sleep of a torpid conscience. I will feign that I did not know where to write you; but I love you and all of yours, and I am tremendously glad that you are home again. When and where shall we meet? Have you come home with your pockets full of *Atlantic* papers?" Clemens, toiling away at his book, was, as usual, not without the prospect of other plans. Orion, as literary material, never failed to excite him.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *Sept. 15, 1879.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—When and where? Here on the farm would be an elegant place to meet, but of course you cannot come so far. So we will say Hartford or Belmont, about the beginning of November. The date of our return to Hartford is uncertain, but will be three or four weeks hence, I judge. I hope to finish my book here before migrating.

I think maybe I've got some Atlantic stuff in my head, but there's none in MS, I believe.

Say—a friend of mine wants to write a play with me, I to furnish the broad-comedy cuss. I don't know anything about his ability, but his letter serves to remind me of *our* old projects. If you haven't used Orion or Old Wakeman, don't you think you and I can get together and grind out a play with one of those fellows in it? Orion is a field which grows richer and richer the more he mulches it with each new topdressing of religion or other guano. Drop me an immediate line about this, won't you? I imagine I see Orion on the stage, always gentle, always melancholy, always changing his politics and religion, and trying to reform the world, always inventing something, and losing a limb by a new kind of explosion at the end of each of the four acts. Poor old chap, he is good material. I can imagine his wife or his sweetheart reluctantly adopting each of his new religions in turn,

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just in time to see him waltz into the next one and leave her isolated once more.

(*Mem.* Orion's wife *has* followed him into the outer darkness, after 30 years' rabid membership in the Presbyterian Church.)

Well, with the sincerest and most abounding love to you and yours, from all this family, I am,

Yrs ever

MARK.

The idea of the play interested Howells, but he had twinges of conscience in the matter of using Orion as material. He wrote: "More than once I have taken the skeleton of that comedy of ours and viewed it with tears. . . . I really have a compunction or two about helping to put your brother into drama. *You* can say that he is your brother, to do what you like with him, but the alien hand might inflict an incurable hurt on his tender heart."

As a matter of fact, Orion Clemens had a keen appreciation of his own shortcomings, and would have enjoyed himself in a play as much as any observer of it. Indeed, it is more than likely that he would have been pleased at the thought of such distinguished dramatization. From the next letter one might almost conclude that he had received a hint of this plan, and was bent upon supplying rich material.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *Oct. 9 '79.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Since my return, the mail facilities have enabled Orion to keep me informed as to his intentions. Twenty-eight days ago it was his purpose to complete a work aimed at religion, the preface to which he had already written. Afterward he began to sell off his furniture, with the idea of hurrying to Leadville and tackling silver-mining—threw up his law den and took in his sign. Then he wrote to Chicago and St. Louis newspapers asking for a situation as "paragrapher"—enclosing a taste of his quality in the shape of two stanzas

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of "humorous rhymes." By a later mail on the same day he applied to New York and Hartford insurance companies for copying to do.

However, it would take too long to detail all his projects. They comprise a removal to south-west Missouri; application for a reporter's berth on a Keokuk paper; application for a compositor's berth on a St. Louis paper; a re-hanging of his attorney's sign, "though it only creaks and catches no flies;" but last night's letter informs me that he has re-tackled the religious question, hired a distant den to write in, applied to my mother for $50 to re-buy his furniture, which has advanced in value since the sale—purposes buying $25 worth of books necessary to his labors which he had previously been borrowing, and his first chapter is already on its way to me for my decision as to whether it has enough ungodliness in it or not. Poor Orion!

Your letter struck me while I was meditating a project to beguile you, and John Hay and Joe Twichell, into a descent upon Chicago which I dream of making, to witness the re-union of the great Commanders of the Western Army Corps on the 9th of next month. My sluggish soul needs a fierce upstirring, and if it would not get it when Grant enters the meeting place I must doubtless "lay" for the final resurrection. Can you and Hay go? At the same time, confound it, I doubt if I can go myself, for this book isn't done yet. But I would give a heap to be there. I mean to heave some holiness into the Hartford primaries when I go back; and if there was a solitary office in the land which majestic ignorance and incapacity, coupled with purity of heart, could fill, I would run for it. This naturally reminds me of Bret Harte—but let him pass.

We propose to leave here for New York Oct. 21, reaching Hartford 24th or 25th. If, upon reflection, you Howellses find you *can* stop over here on your way, I wish you would do it, and telegraph me. Getting pretty hungry to see you. I had an idea that this was your

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shortest way home, but like as not my geography is crippled again—it usually is.

Yrs ever

MARK.

The "Reunion of the Great Commanders," mentioned in the foregoing, was a welcome to General Grant after his journey around the world. Grant's trip had been one continuous ovation—a triumphal march. In '79 most of his old commanders were still alive, and they had planned to assemble in Chicago to do him honor. A Presidential year was coming on, but if there was anything political in the project there were no surface indications. Mark Twain, once a Confederate soldier, had long since been completely "desouthernized"—at least to the point where he felt that the sight of old comrades paying tribute to the Union commander would stir his blood as perhaps it had not been stirred, even in that earlier time, when that same commander had chased him through the Missouri swamps. Grant, indeed, had long since become a hero to Mark Twain, though it is highly unlikely that Clemens favored the idea of a third term. Some days following the preceding letter an invitation came for him to be present at the Chicago reunion; but by this time he had decided not to go. The letter he wrote has been preserved.

To Gen. William E. Strong, in Chicago:

FARMINGTON AVENUE, HARTFORD.
Oct. 28, 1879.

GEN. WM. E. STRONG, CH'M,
AND GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE:

I have been hoping during several weeks that it might be my good fortune to receive an invitation to be present on that great occasion in Chicago; but now that my desire is accomplished my business matters have so shaped themselves as to bar me from being so far from home in the first half of November. It is with supreme regret that I lost this chance, for I have not had a thorough stirring up for some years, and I judged that if I could be in the banqueting hall and see and hear the veterans of the Army

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of the Tennessee at the moment that their old commander entered the room, or rose in his place to speak, my system would get the kind of upheaval it needs. General Grant's progress across the continent is of the marvelous nature of the returning Napoleon's progress from Grenoble to Paris; and as the crowning spectacle in the one case was the meeting with the Old Guard, so, likewise, the crowning spectacle in the other will be our great captain's meeting with *his* Old Guard—and that is the very climax which I wanted to witness.

Besides, I wanted to see the General again, any way, and renew the acquaintance. He would remember me, because I was the person who did not ask him for an office. However, I consume your time, and also wander from the point—which is, to thank you for the courtesy of your invitation, and yield up my seat at the table to some other guest who may possibly grace it better, but will certainly not appreciate its privileges more, than I should.

With great respect,
I am, Gentlemen,
Very truly yours,
S. L. CLEMENS.

Private:—I beg to apologize for my delay, gentlemen, but the card of invitation went to Elmira, N. Y. and hence has only just now reached me.

This letter was not sent. He reconsidered and sent an acceptance, agreeing to speak, as the committee had requested. Certainly there was something picturesque in the idea of the Missouri private who had been chased for a rainy fortnight through the swamps of Ralls County being selected now to join in welcome to his ancient enemy.

The great reunion was to be something more than a mere banquet. It would continue for several days, with processions, great assemblages, and much oratory.

Mark Twain arrived in Chicago in good season to see it all. Three letters to Mrs. Clemens intimately present his experiences: his enthusiastic enjoyment and his own personal triumph.

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The first was probably written after the morning of his arrival. The Doctor Jackson in it was Dr. A. Reeves Jackson, the guide-dismaying "Doctor" of *Innocents Abroad.*

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

PALMER HOUSE, CHICAGO, *Nov. 11.*

Livy darling, I am getting a trifle leg-weary. Dr. Jackson called and dragged me out of bed at noon, yesterday, and then went off. I went down stairs and was introduced to some scores of people, and among them an elderly German gentleman named Raster, who said his wife owed her life to me—hurt in Chicago fire and lay menaced with death a long time, but the Innocents Abroad kept her mind in a cheerful attitude, and so, with the doctor's help for the body she pulled through. . . . They drove me to Dr. Jackson's and I had an hour's visit with Mrs. Jackson. Started to walk down Michigan Avenue, got a few steps on my way and met an erect, soldierly looking young gentleman who offered his hand; said, "Mr. Clemens, I believe—I wish to introduce myself—you were pointed out to me yesterday as I was driving down street —my name is Grant."

"Col. Fred Grant?"

"Yes. My house is not ten steps away, and I would like you to come and have a talk and a pipe, and let me introduce my wife."

So we turned back and entered the house next to Jackson's and talked something more than an hour and smoked many pipes and had a sociable good time. His wife is very gentle and intelligent and pretty, and they have a cunning little girl nearly as big as Bay but only three years old. They wanted me to come in and spend an evening, after the banquet, with them and Gen. Grant, after this grand pow-wow is over, but I said I was going home Friday. Then they asked me to come Friday afternoon, when they and the general will receive a few friends, and I said I would. Col. Grant said he and Gen. Sherman

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used the Innocents Abroad as their guide book when they were on their travels.

I stepped in next door and took Dr. Jackson to the hotel and we played billiards from 7 to 11.30 P.M. and then went to a beer-mill to meet some twenty Chicago journalists—talked, sang songs and made speeches till 6 o'clock this morning. Nobody got in the least degree "under the influence," and we had a pleasant time. Read awhile in bed, slept till 11, shaved, went to breakfast at noon, and by mistake got into the servants' hall. I remained there and breakfasted with twenty or thirty male and female servants, though I had a table to myself.

A temporary structure, clothed and canopied with flags, has been erected at the hotel front, and connected with the second-story windows of a drawing-room. It was for Gen. Grant to stand on and review the procession. Sixteen persons, besides reporters, had tickets for this place, and a seventeenth was issued for me. I was there, looking down on the packed and struggling crowd when Gen. Grant came forward and was saluted by the cheers of the multitude and the waving of ladies' handkerchiefs —for the windows and roofs of all neighboring buildings were massed full of life. Gen. Grant bowed to the people two or three times, then approached my side of the platform and the mayor pulled me forward and introduced me. It was dreadfully conspicuous. The General said a word or so—I replied, and then said, "But I'll step back, General, I don't want to interrupt your speech."

"But I'm not going to make any—stay where you are —I'll get you to make it for me."

General Sherman came on the platform wearing the uniform of a full General, and you should have heard the cheers. Gen. Logan was going to introduce me, but I didn't want any more conspicuousness.

When the head of the procession passed it was grand to see Sheridan, in his military cloak and his plumed chapeau, sitting as erect and rigid as a statue on his im-

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mense black horse—by far the most martial figure I ever saw. And the crowd roared again.

It was chilly, and Gen. Deems lent me his overcoat until night. He came a few minutes ago—5.45 P.M., and got it, but brought Gen. Willard, who lent me his for the rest of my stay, and will get another for himself when he goes home to dinner. Mine is much too heavy for this warm weather.

I have a seat on the stage at Haverley's Theatre, to-night, where the Army of the Tennessee will receive Gen. Grant, and where Gen. Sherman will make a speech. At midnight I am to attend a meeting of the Owl Club.

I love you ever so much, my darling, and am hoping to get a word from you *yet.* SAML.

Following the procession, which he describes, came the grand ceremonies of welcome at Haverley's Theatre. The next letter is written the following morning, or at least some time the following day, after a night of ratification.

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

CHICAGO, *Nov. 12, '79.*

Livy darling, it was a great time. There were perhaps thirty people on the stage of the theatre, and I think I never sat elbow-to-elbow with so many historic names before. Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Schofield, Pope, Logan, Augur, and so on. What an iron man Grant is! He sat facing the house, with his right leg crossed over his left and his right boot-sole tilted up at an angle, and his left hand and arm reposing on the arm of his chair—you note that position? Well, when glowing references were made to other grandees on the stage, those grandees always showed a trifle of nervous consciousness—and as these references came frequently, the nervous change of position and attitude were also frequent. But Grant!—*he* was under a tremendous and ceaseless bombardment of praise and gratulation, but as true as I'm sitting here he

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never moved a muscle of his body for a single instant, during 30 minutes! You could have played him on a stranger for an effigy. Perhaps he never *would* have moved, but at last a speaker made such a particularly ripping and blood-stirring remark about him that the audience rose and roared and yelled and stamped and clapped an entire minute—Grant sitting as serene as ever—when Gen. Sherman stepped to him, laid his hand affectionately on his shoulder, bent respectfully down and whispered in his ear. Gen. Grant got up and bowed, and the storm of applause swelled into a hurricane. He sat down, took about the same position and froze to it till by and by there was another of those deafening and protracted roars, when Sherman made him get up and bow again. He broke up his attitude once more—the extent of something more than a hair's breadth—to indicate me to Sherman when the house was keeping up a determined and persistent call for me, and poor bewildered Sherman, (who did not know me), was peering abroad over the packed audience for me, not knowing I was only three feet from him and most conspicuously located, (Gen. Sherman was Chairman.)

One of the most illustrious individuals on that stage was "Ole Abe," the historic war eagle. He stood on his perch—the old savage-eyed rascal—three or four feet behind Gen. Sherman, and as he had been in nearly every battle that was mentioned by the orators his soul was probably stirred pretty often, though he was too proud to let on.

Read Logan's bosh, and try to imagine a burly and magnificent Indian, in General's uniform, striking a heroic attitude and getting that stuff off in the style of a declaiming school-boy.

Please put the enclosed scraps in the drawer and I will scrap-book them.

I only staid at the Owl Club till 3 this morning and drank little or nothing. Went to sleep without whisky. Ich liebe dich. SAML.

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But it is in the third letter that we get the climax. On the same day he wrote a letter to Howells, which, in part, is very similar in substance and need not be included here.[1]

A paragraph, however, must not be omitted.

"Imagine what it was like to see a bullet-shredded old battle-flag reverently unfolded to the gaze of a thousand middle-aged soldiers, most of whom hadn't seen it since they saw it advancing over victorious fields, when they were in their prime. And imagine what it was like when Grant, their first commander, stepped into view while they were still going mad over the flag, and then right in the midst of it all somebody struck up, 'When we were marching through Georgia.' Well, you should have heard the thousand voices lift that chorus and seen the tears stream down. If I live a hundred years I shan't ever forget these things, nor be able to talk about them. . . . Grand times, my boy, grand times!"

At the great banquet Mark Twain's speech had been put last on the program, to hold the house. He had been invited to respond to the toast of "The Ladies," but had replied that he had already responded to that toast more than once. There was one class of the community, he said, commonly overlooked on these occasions—the babies—he would respond to that toast. In his letter to Howells he had not been willing to speak freely of his personal triumph, but to Mrs. Clemens he must tell it all, and with that child-like ingenuousness which never failed him to his last day.

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

CHICAGO, *Nov. 14 '79.*

A little after 5 in the *morning.*

I've just come to my room, Livy darling, I guess this was the memorable night of my life. By George, I never was so stirred since I was born. I heard four speeches which I can never forget. One by Emory Storrs, one by Gen. Vilas (O, wasn't it wonderful!) one by Gen. Logan (mighty stirring), one by somebody whose name escapes

[1] See *Mark Twain: A Biography*, pp. 654–5.

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me, and one by that splendid old soul, Col. Bob Ingersoll, —oh, it was just the supremest combination of English words that was ever put together since the world began. My soul, how handsome he looked, as he stood on that table, in the midst of those 500 shouting men, and poured the molten silver from his lips! Lord, what an organ is human speech when it is played by a master! All these speeches may look dull in print, but how the lightning glared around them when they were uttered, and how the crowd roared in response! It was a great night, a memorable night. I am so richly repaid for my journey—and how I did wish with all my whole heart that you were there to be lifted into the very seventh heaven of enthusiasm, as I was. The army songs, the military music, the crashing applause—Lord bless me, it was unspeakable.

Out of compliment they placed me last in the list—No. 15—I was to "hold the crowd"—and bless my life I was in awful terror when No. 14 rose, at 2 o'clock this morning and killed *all* the enthusiasm by delivering the flattest, insipidest, silliest of all responses to "Woman" that ever a weary multitude listened to. Then Gen. Sherman (Chairman) announced my toast, and the crowd gave me a good round of applause as I mounted on top of the dinner table, but it was only on account of my name, nothing more—they were all tired and wretched. They let my first sentence go in silence, till I paused and added "we stand on common ground"—then they burst forth like a hurricane and I saw that I *had* them! From that time on, I stopped at the end of each sentence, and let the tornado of applause and laughter sweep around me—and when I closed with "And if the child is but the prophecy of the man, there are mighty few who will doubt that he succeeded," I say it who oughtn't to say it, the house came down with a crash. For two hours and a half, now, I've been shaking hands and listening to congratulations. Gen. Sherman said, "Lord bless you, my boy, I don't know how you do it—it's a secret that's beyond me—but it was great—give me your hand again."

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And do you know, Gen. Grant sat through fourteen speeches like a graven image, but I fetched him! I broke him up, utterly! He told me he laughed till the tears came and every bone in his body ached. (And do you know, the biggest part of the success of the speech lay in the fact that the audience *saw* that for once in his life he had been knocked out of his iron serenity.)

Bless your soul, 'twas immense. I never was so proud in my life. Lots and lots of people—hundreds I might say—told me my speech was the triumph of the evening —which was a lie. Ladies, Tom, Dick and Harry—even the policemen—captured me in the halls and shook hands, and scores of army officers said "We shall always be grateful to you for coming." General Pope came to hunt me up—I was afraid to speak to him on that theatre stage last night, thinking it might be presumptuous to tackle a man so high up in military history. Gen. Schofield, and other historic men, paid their compliments. Sheridan was ill and could not come, but I'm to go with a General of his staff and see him before I go to Col. Grant's. Gen. Augur—well, I've talked with them *all*, received invitations from them all—from people living everywhere—and as I said before, it's a memorable night. I wouldn't have missed it for anything in the world.

But my sakes, you should have heard Ingersoll's speech on that table! Half an hour ago he ran across me in the crowded halls and put his arms about me and said "Mark, if I live a hundred years, I'll always be grateful for your speech—Lord what a supreme thing it was." But I told him it wasn't any use to talk, *he* had walked off with the honors of that occasion by something of a majority. Bully boy is Ingersoll—traveled with him in the cars the other day, and you can make up your mind we had a good time.

Of *course* I forgot to go and pay for my hotel car and so secure it, but the army officers told me an hour ago to rest easy, they would go at once, at this unholy hour of the night and compel the railways to do their duty by

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me, and said "You don't need to *request* the Army of the Tennessee to do your desires—you can *command* its services."

Well, I bummed around that banquet hall from 8 in the evening till 2 in the morning, talking with people and listening to speeches, and I never ate a single bite or took a sup of anything but ice water, so if I seem excited now, it is the intoxication of supreme enthusiasm. By George, it was a grand night, a historical night.

And now it is a quarter past 6 A.M.—so good bye and God bless you and the Bays,[1] my darlings

SAML.

Show it to Joe if you want to—I saw some of his friends here.

Mark Twain's admiration for Robert Ingersoll was very great, and we may believe that he was deeply impressed by the Chicago speech, when we find him, a few days later, writing to Ingersoll for a perfect copy to read to a young girls' club in Hartford. Ingersoll sent the speech, also some of his books, and the next letter is Mark Twain's acknowledgment.

To Col. Robert G. Ingersoll:

HARTFORD, *Dec. 14.*

MY DEAR INGERSOLL,—Thank you most heartily for the books—I am devouring them—they have found a hungry place, and they content it and satisfy it to a miracle. I wish I could hear you *speak* these splendid chapters before a great audience—to read them by myself and hear the boom of the applause only in the ear of my imagination, leaves a something wanting—and there is also a still greater lack, your manner, and voice, and presence.

The Chicago speech arrived an hour too late, but I was all right anyway, for I found that my memory had

[1] Family word for babies.

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been able to correct all the errors. I read it to the Saturday Club (of young girls) and told them to remember that it was doubtful if its superior existed in our language.

Truly Yours,
S. L. CLEMENS.

The reader may remember Mark Twain's Whittier dinner speech of 1877, and its disastrous effects. Now, in 1879, there was to be another *Atlantic* gathering: a breakfast to Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, to which Clemens was invited. He was not eager to accept; it would naturally recall memories of two years before, but being urged by both Howells and Warner, he agreed to attend if they would permit him to speak. Mark Twain never lacked courage and he wanted to redeem himself. To Howells he wrote:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Nov. 28, 1879.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—If anybody talks, there, I shall claim the right to say a word myself, and be heard among the very *earliest*—else it would be confoundedly awkward for me—and for the rest, too. But you may read what I say, beforehand, and strike out whatever you choose.

Of course I thought it wisest not to be there at all; but Warner took the opposite view, and most strenuously.

Speaking of Johnny's conclusion to become an outlaw, reminds me of Susie's newest and very earnest longing—to have crooked teeth and glasses—"like Mamma."

I would like to look into a child's head, once, and see what its processes are.

Yrs ever,
S. L. CLEMENS.

The matter turned out well. Clemens, once more introduced by Howells—this time conservatively, it may be said—delivered a delicate and fitting tribute to Doctor Holmes, full of graceful humor and grateful acknowledgment, the kind of speech he should have given at the Whittier dinner of two years before. No reference was made to his former disaster, and this time he came away covered with glory, and fully restored in his self-respect.

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XX

LETTERS OF 1880, CHIEFLY TO HOWELLS. "THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER." MARK TWAIN MUGWUMP SOCIETY

THE book of travel,[1] which Mark Twain had hoped to finish in Paris, and later in Elmira, for some reason would not come to an end. In December, in Hartford, he was still working on it, and he would seem to have finished it, at last, rather by a decree than by any natural process of authorship. This was early in January, 1880. To Howells he reports his difficulties, and his drastic method of ending them.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Jan. 8, '80.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Am waiting for Patrick to come with the carriage. Mrs. Clemens and I are starting (without the children) to stay indefinitely in Elmira. The wear and tear of settling the house broke her down, and she has been growing weaker and weaker for a fortnight. All that time—in fact ever since I saw you—I have been fighting a life-and-death battle with this infernal book and *hoping* to get done some day. I required 300 pages of MS, and I have written near 600 since I saw you—and tore it all up except 288. This I was about to tear up yesterday and begin again, when Mrs. Perkins came up to the billiard room and said, "You will never get any woman to do the thing necessary to save her life by mere *persuasion;* you see you have wasted your words for three weeks; it is time to use *force;* she *must* have a change; take her home and leave the children here."

[1] *A Tramp Abroad.*

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I said, "If there is one death that is painfuller than another, may I get it if I don't do that thing."

So I took the 288 pages to Bliss and told him that was the very last line I should ever write on this book. (A book which required 2600 pages of MS, and I have written nearer four thousand, first and last.)

I am as soary (and flighty) as a rocket, to-day, with the unutterable joy of getting that Old Man of the Sea off my back, where he has been roosting for more than a year and a half. Next time I make a contract before writing the book, may I suffer the righteous penalty and be burnt, like the injudicious believer.

I am mighty glad you are done your book (this is from a man who, above all others, feels how much that sentence means) and am also mighty glad you have begun the next (this is also from a man who knows the felicity of *that*, and means straightway to enjoy it.) The Undiscovered starts off delightfully—I have read it aloud to Mrs. C. and we vastly enjoyed it.

Well, time's about up—must drop a line to Aldrich.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

In a letter which Mark Twain wrote to his brother Orion at this period we get the first hint of a venture which was to play an increasingly important part in the Hartford home and fortunes during the next ten or a dozen years. This was the type-setting machine investment, which, in the end, all but wrecked Mark Twain's finances. There is but a brief mention of it in the letter to Orion, and the letter itself is not worth preserving, but as references to the "machine" appear with increasing frequency, it seems proper to record here its first mention. In the same letter he suggests to his brother that he undertake an absolutely truthful autobiography, a confession in which nothing is to be withheld. He cites the value of Casanova's memories, and the confessions of Rousseau. Of course, any literary suggestion from "Brother Sam" was gospel to Orion, who began at once piling up manuscript at a great rate.

Meantime, Mark Twain himself, having got *A Tramp Abroad* on the presses, was at work with enthusiasm on a story

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begun nearly three years before at Quarry Farm—a story for children—its name, as he called it then, "The Little Prince and The Little Pauper." He was presently writing to Howells his delight in the new work.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Mch. 11, '80.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,— . . . I take so much pleasure in my story that I am loth to hurry, not wanting to get it done. Did I ever tell you the plot of it? It begins at 9 a.m., Jan. 27, 1547, seventeen and a half hours before Henry VIII's death, by the swapping of clothes *and places*, between the prince of Wales and a pauper boy of the same age and countenance (and half as much learning and still more genius and imagination) and after that, the rightful small King has a rough time among tramps and ruffians in the country parts of Kent, whilst the small bogus King has a gilded and worshipped and dreary and restrained and cussed time of it on the throne—and this all goes on for three weeks—till the midst of the coronation grandeurs in Westminster Abbey, Feb. 20, when the ragged true King forces his way in but cannot prove his genuineness—until the bogus King, by a remembered incident of the first day is able to prove it *for* him—whereupon clothes are changed and the coronation proceeds under the new and rightful conditions.

My idea is to afford a realizing sense of the exceeding severity of the laws of that day by inflicting some of their penalties upon the King himself and allowing him a chance to see the rest of them applied to others—all of which is to account for certain mildnesses which distinguished Edward VI's reign from those that preceded and followed it.

Imagine *this* fact—I have even fascinated Mrs. Clemens with this yarn for youth. My stuff generally gets considerable damning with faint praise out of her, but this time it is all the other way. She is become the horse-

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leech's daughter and my mill doesn't grind fast enough to suit her. This is no mean triumph, my dear sir.

Last night, for the first time in ages, we went to the theatre—to see Yorick's Love. The magnificence of it is beyond praise. The language is so beautiful, the passion so fine, the plot so ingenious, the whole thing so stirring, so charming, so pathetic! But I will clip from the Courant —it says it right.

And what a good company it is, and how like live people they all acted! The "thee's" and the "thou's" had a pleasant sound, since it is the language of the Prince and the Pauper. You've done the country a service in that admirable work. . . .

Yrs Ever,

MARK.

The play, "Yorick's Love," mentioned in this letter, was one which Howells had done for Lawrence Barrett.

Orion Clemens, meantime, was forwarding his manuscript, and for once seems to have won his brother's approval, so much so that Mark Twain was willing, indeed anxious, that Howells should run the "autobiography" in the *Atlantic*. We may imagine how Orion prized the words of commendation which follow:

To Orion Clemens:

May 6, '80.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—It is a model autobiography.

Continue to develop your character in the same gradual inconspicuous and apparently unconscious way. The reader, up to this time, may have his doubts, perhaps, but he can't say decidedly, "This writer is not such a simpleton as he has been letting on to be." Keep him in that state of mind. If, when you shall have finished, the reader shall say, "The man is an ass, but I really don't know whether *he* knows it or not," your work will be a triumph.

Stop *re-writing*. I saw places in your last batch where re-writing had done formidable injury. Do not try to find those places, else you will mar them further by try-

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ing to better them. It is perilous to revise a book while it is under way. All of us have injured our books in that foolish way.

Keep in mind what I told you—when you recollect something which belonged in an earlier chapter, do not go back, but jam it in *where you are*. Discursiveness does not hurt an autobiography in the least.

I have penciled the MS here and there, but have not needed to make any criticisms or to knock out anything.

The elder Bliss has heart disease badly, and thenceforth his life hangs upon a thread.

Yr Bro SAM.

But Howells could not bring himself to print so frank a confession as Orion had been willing to make. "It wrung my heart," he said, "and I felt haggard after I had finished it. The writer's soul is laid bare; it is shocking." Howells added that the best touches in it were those which made one acquainted with the writer's brother; that is to say, Mark Twain, and that these would prove valuable material hereafter—a true prophecy, for Mark Twain's early biography would have lacked most of its vital incident, and at least half of its background, without those faithful chapters, fortunately preserved. Had Orion continued, as he began, the work might have proved an important contribution to literature, but he went trailing off into by-paths of theology and discussion where the interest was lost. There were, perhaps, as many as two thousand pages of it, which few could undertake to read.

Mark Twain's mind was always busy with plans and inventions, many of them of serious intent, some semi-serious, others of a purely whimsical character. Once he proposed a "Modest Club," of which the first and main qualification for membership was modesty. "At present," he wrote, "I am the only member; and as the modesty required must be of a quite aggravated type, the enterprise did seem for a time doomed to stop dead still with myself, for lack of further material; but upon reflection I have come to the conclusion that you are eligible. Therefore, I have held a meeting and voted to offer you the distinction of membership. I do not know that we can find any others, though I have had some thought of Hay, Warner, Twichell, Aldrich, Osgood,

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Fields, Higginson, and a few more—together with Mrs. Howells, Mrs. Clemens, and certain others of the sex."

Howells replied that the only reason he had for not joining the Modest Club was that he was too modest—too modest to confess his modesty. "If I could get over this difficulty I should like to join, for I approve highly of the Club and its object. . . . It ought to be given an annual dinner at the public expense. If you think I am not too modest you may put my name down and I will try to think the same of you. Mrs. Howells applauded the notion of the club from the very first. She said that she knew *one* thing: that she was modest enough, *anyway*. Her manner of saying it implied that the other persons you had named were not, and created a painful impression in my mind. I have sent your letter and the rules to Hay, but I doubt his modesty. He will think he has a *right* to belong to it as much as you or I; whereas, other people ought only to be admitted on sufferance."

Our next letter to Howells is, in the main, pure foolery, but we get in it a hint what was to become in time one of Mark Twain's strongest interests, the matter of copyright. He had both a personal and general interest in the subject. His own books were constantly pirated in Canada, and the rights of foreign authors were not respected in America. We have already seen how he had drawn a petition which Holmes, Lowell, Longfellow, and others were to sign, and while nothing had come of this plan he had never ceased to formulate others. Yet he hesitated when he found that the proposed protection was likely to work a hardship to readers of the poorer class. Once he wrote: "My notions have mightily changed lately. . . . I can buy a lot of the copyright classics, in paper, at from three to thirty cents apiece. These things must find their way into the very kitchens and hovels of the country. . . . And even if the treaty *will* kill Canadian piracy, and thus save me an average of $5,000 a year, I am down on it anyway, and I'd like cussed well to write an article opposing the treaty."

To W. D. Howells, in Belmont, Mass.:

Thursday, June 6th, 1880.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—There you stick, at Belmont, and now I'm going to Washington for a few days; and

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of course, between you and Providence that visit is going to get mixed, and you'll have been here and gone again just about the time I get back. Bother it all, I wanted to astonish you with a chapter or two from Orion's latest book—not the seventeen which he has begun in the last four months, but the one which he began last week.

Last night, when I went to bed, Mrs. Clemens said, "George didn't take the cat down to the cellar—Rosa says he has left it shut up in the conservatory." So I went down to attend to Abner (the cat.) About 3 in the morning Mrs. C. woke me and said, "I do believe I hear that cat in the drawing-room—what did you do with him?" I answered up with the confidence of a man who has managed to do the right thing for once, and said "I opened the conservatory doors, took the library off the alarm, and spread everything open, so that there wasn't any obstruction between him and the cellar." Language wasn't capable of conveying this woman's disgust. But the sense of what she said, was, "He couldn't have done any harm in the conservatory—so you must go and make the entire house free to him and the burglars, imagining that he will prefer the coal-bins to the drawing-room. If you had had Mr. Howells to help you, I should have admired but not been astonished, because I should know that *together* you would be equal to it; but how you managed to contrive such a stately blunder all by yourself, is what I cannot understand."

So, you see, even *she* knows how to appreciate our gifts.

Brisk times here.—Saturday, these things happened: Our neighbor Chas. Smith was stricken with heart disease, and came near joining the majority; my publisher, Bliss, ditto, ditto; a neighbor's child died; neighbor Whitmore's sixth child added to his five other cases of measles; neighbor Niles sent for, and responded; Susie Warner down, abed; Mrs. George Warner threatened with death during several hours; her son Frank, whilst imitating the marvels in Barnum's circus bills, thrown from his aged horse and brought home insensible: War-

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ner's friend Max Yortzburgh, shot in the back by a locomotive and broken into 32 distinct pieces and his life threatened; and Mrs. Clemens, after writing all these cheerful things to Clara Spaulding, taken at midnight, and if the doctor had not been pretty prompt the contemplated Clemens would have called before his apartments were ready.

However, everybody is all right, now, except Yortzburg, and he is mending—that is, he is *being* mended. I knocked off, during these stirring times, and don't intend to go to work again till we go away for the Summer, 3 or 6 weeks hence. So I am writing to you not because I have anything to say, but because you don't have to answer and I need something to do this afternoon. . . .

I have a letter from a Congressman this morning, and he says Congress couldn't be persuaded to bother about Canadian pirates at a time like this when *all* legislation must have a political and Presidential bearing, else Congress won't look at it. So have changed my mind and my course; I go north, to kill a pirate. I must procure repose *some* way, else I cannot get down to work again.

Pray offer my most sincere and respectful approval to the President—is approval the proper word? I find it is the one I most value here in the household and seldomest get.

With our affection to you both.

Yrs ever

MARK.

It was always dangerous to send strangers with letters of introduction to Mark Twain. They were so apt to arrive at the wrong time, or to find him in the wrong mood. Howells was willing to risk it, and that the result was only amusing instead of tragic is the best proof of their friendship.

To W. D. Howells, in Belmont, Mass.:

June 9, '80.

Well, old practical joker, the corpse of Mr. X—— has been here, and I have bedded it and fed it, and put down

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my work during 24 hours and tried my level best to make it do something, or say something, or appreciate something—but no, it was *worse* than Lazarus. A kind-hearted, well-meaning corpse was the Boston young man, but lawsy bless me, horribly dull company. Now, old man, unless you have great confidence in Mr. X's judgment, you ought to make him submit his article to you before he prints it. For only think how true I was to you: Every hour that he was here I was saying, gloatingly, "O G——d——you, when you are in bed and your light out, I will fix you" (meaning to kill him) . . . but then the thought would follow—"No, Howells sent him—he shall be spared, he shall be respected—he shall travel hell-wards by his own route."

Breakfast is frozen by this time, and Mrs. Clemens correspondingly hot. Good bye.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

"I did not expect you to ask that man to *live* with you," Howells answered. "What I was afraid of was that you would turn him out of doors, on sight, and so I tried to put in a good word for him. After this when I want you to board people, I'll ask you. I am sorry for your suffering. I suppose I have mostly lost my smell for bores; but yours is preternaturally keen. I shall begin to be afraid *I* bore you. (How does that make you feel?)"

In a letter to Twichell—a remarkable letter—when baby Jean Clemens was about a month old, we get a happy hint of conditions at Quarry Farm, and in the background a glimpse of Mark Twain's unfailing tragic reflection.

To Rev. Twichell, in Hartford:

QUARRY FARM, *Aug. 29* ['80].

DEAR OLD JOE,—Concerning Jean Clemens, if anybody said he "didn't see no p'ints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog," I should think he was convicting himself of being a pretty poor sort of observer. . . . I will not go into details; it is not necessary; you will soon be

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in Hartford, where I have already hired a hall; the admission fee will be but a trifle.

It is curious to note the change in the stock-quotation of the Affection Board brought about by throwing this new security on the market. Four weeks ago the children still put Mamma at the head of the list right along, where she had always been. But now:

Jean
Mamma
Motley } cats.
Fraulein }
Papa

That is the way it stands, now. Mamma is become No. 2; I have dropped from No. 4, and am become No. 5. Some time ago it used to be nip and tuck between me and the cats, but after the cats "developed" I didn't stand any more show.

I've got a swollen ear; so I take advantage of it to lie abed most of the day, and read and smoke and scribble and have a good time. Last evening Livy said with deep concern, "O dear, I believe an abscess is forming in your ear."

I responded as the poet would have done if he had had a cold in the head—

"Tis said that abscess conquers love,
But O believe it not."

This made a coolness.

Been reading Daniel Webster's Private Correspondence. Have read a hundred of his diffuse, conceited, "eloquent," bathotic (or bathostic) letters written in that dim (no, vanished) Past when he was a student; and Lord, to think that this boy who is so real to me now, and so booming with fresh young blood and bountiful life, and sappy cynicisms about girls, has since climbed the Alps of fame and stood against the sun one brief tremendous moment with the world's eyes upon him, and then—f-z-t-! where

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is he? Why the only *long* thing, the only *real* thing about the whole shadowy business is the sense of the lagging dull and hoary lapse of time that has drifted by since then; a vast empty level, it seems, with a formless spectre glimpsed fitfully through the smoke and mist that lie along its remote verge.

Well, we are all getting along here first-rate; Livy gains strength daily, and sits up a deal; the baby is five weeks old and—but no more of this; somebody may be reading *this* letter 80 years hence. And so, my friend (you pitying snob, I mean, who are holding this yellow paper in your hand in 1960,) save yourself the trouble of looking further; I know how pathetically trivial our small concerns will seem to you, and I will not let your eye profane them. No, I keep my news; you keep your compassion. Suffice it you to know, scoffer and ribald, that the little child is old and blind, now, and once more toothless; and the rest of us are shadows, these many, many years. Yes, and *your* time cometh!

MARK.

At the Farm that year Mark Twain was working on *The Prince and the Pauper*, and, according to a letter to Aldrich, brought it to an end September 14th. It is a pleasant letter, worth preserving. The book by Aldrich here mentioned was *The Stillwater Tragedy*.

To T. B. Aldrich, in Ponkapog, Mass.:

ELMIRA, *Sept. 15, '80.*

MY DEAR ALDRICH,—Thank you ever so much for the book—I had already finished it, and prodigiously enjoyed it, in the periodical of the notorious Howells, but it hits Mrs. Clemens just right, for she is having a reading holiday, now, for the first time in some months; so betweentimes, when the new baby is asleep and strengthening up for another attempt to take possession of this place, she is going to read it. Her strong friendship for you makes her think she is going to like it.

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I finished a story yesterday, myself. I counted up and found it between sixty and eighty thousand words—about the size of your book. It is for boys and girls—been at work at it several years, off and on.

I hope Howells is enjoying his journey to the Pacific. He wrote me that you and Osgood were going, also, but I doubted it, believing he was in liquor when he wrote it. In my opinion, this universal applause over his book is going to land that man in a Retreat inside of two months. I notice the papers say mighty fine things about your book, too. You ought to try to get into the same establishment with Howells. But applause does not affect me—I am always calm—this is because I am used to it.

Well, good-bye, my boy, and good luck to you. Mrs. Clemens asks me to send her warmest regards to you and Mrs. Aldrich—which I do, and add those of

Yrs ever

MARK.

While Mark Twain was a journalist in San Francisco, there was a middle-aged man named Soule, who had a desk near him on the *Morning Call*. Soule was in those days highly considered as a poet by his associates, most of whom were younger and less gracefully poetic. But Soule's gift had never been an important one. Now, in his old age, he found his fame still local, and he yearned for wider recognition. He wished to have a volume of poems issued by a publisher of recognized standing. Because Mark Twain had been one of Soule's admirers and a warm friend in the old days, it was natural that Soule should turn to him now, and equally natural that Clemens should turn to Howells.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Sunday, Oct. 24 '80.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Here's a letter which I wrote you to San Francisco the second time you didn't go there. . . . I told Soule he needn't write you, but simply send the MS. to you. O dear, dear, it is dreadful to be an unrecognized poet. How wise it was in Charles Warren Stoddard

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it between sixty & Eighty thousand words — about the size of your book. It is for boys & girls — been at work at it several years, off & on.

I hope Howells is enjoying his journey to the Pacific. He wrote me that You & Osgood were going, also, but I doubted it, ~~[illegible]~~ believing he was in liquor when he wrote it. In my opinion, this universal applause over his

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to take in his sign and go for some other calling while still young.

I'm laying for that Encyclopedical Scotchman—and he'll need to lock the door behind him, when he comes in; otherwise when he hears my proposed tariff his skin will probably crawl away with him. He is accustomed to seeing the publisher impoverish the author—that spectacle must be getting stale to him—if he contracts with the undersigned he will experience a change in that programme that will make the enamel peel off his teeth for very surprise—and joy. No, that last is what Mrs. Clemens thinks—but it's not so. The proposed work is growing, mightily, in my estimation, day by day; and I'm not going to throw it away for any mere trifle. If I make a contract with the canny Scot, I will then tell him the plan which you and I have devised (that of taking in the humor of *all* countries)—otherwise I'll keep it to myself, I think. Why should we assist our fellowman for mere love of God?

Yrs ever

MARK.

One wishes that Howells might have found value enough in the verses of Frank Soule to recommend them to Osgood. To Clemens he wrote: "You have touched me in regard to him, and I will deal gently with his poetry. Poor old fellow! I can imagine him, and how he must have to struggle not to be hard or sour."

The verdict, however, was inevitable. Soule's graceful verses proved to be not poetry at all. No publisher of standing could afford to give them his imprint.

The "Encyclopedical Scotchman" mentioned in the preceding letter was the publisher Gebbie, who had a plan to engage Howells and Clemens to prepare some sort of anthology of the world's literature. The idea came to nothing, though the other plan mentioned—for a library of humor—in time grew into a book.

Mark Twain's contracts with Bliss for the publication of his books on the subscription plan had been made on a royalty basis, beginning with 5 per cent. on *The Innocents Abroad*, in-

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creasing to 7½ per cent. on *Roughing It*, and to 10 per cent. on later books. Bliss had held that these later percentages fairly represented one half the profits. Clemens, however, had never been fully satisfied, and his brother Orion had more than once urged him to demand a specific contract on the half-profit basis. The agreement for the publication of *A Tramp Abroad* was made on these terms. Bliss died before Clemens received his first statement of sales. Whatever may have been the facts under earlier conditions, the statement proved to Mark Twain's satisfaction; at least, that the half-profit arrangement was to his advantage. It produced another result; it gave Samuel Clemens an excuse to place his brother Orion in a position of independence.

To Orion Clemens, in Keokuk, Iowa:

Sunday, Oct 24 '80.

MY DEAR BRO.,—Bliss is dead. The aspect of the balance-sheet is enlightening. It reveals the fact, through my present contract, (which is for half the profits on the book above actual cost of paper, printing and binding,) that I have lost considerably by all this nonsense [1]—sixty thousand dollars, I should say—and if Bliss were alive I would stay with the concern and get it all back; for on each new book I would require a portion of that back pay; but as it is (*this in the very strictest confidence,*) I shall probably go to a new publisher 6 or 8 months hence, for I am afraid Frank, with his poor health, will lack push and drive.

Out of the suspicions you bred in me years ago, has grown this result,—to wit, that I shall within the twelvemonth get $40,000 out of this "Tramp" instead of $20,000. Twenty thousand dollars, after taxes and other expenses are stripped away, is worth to the investor about $75 a month—so I shall tell Mr. Perkins to make your check that amount per month, hereafter, while our income is able to afford it. This ends the loan business; and hereafter you can reflect that you are living not on borrowed

[1] Percentage contracts on his former books.

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money but on money which you have squarely earned, and which has no taint or savor of charity about it—and you can also reflect that the money you have been receiving of me all these years is interest charged against the heavy bill which the next publisher will have to stand who gets a book of mine.

Jean got the stockings and is much obliged; Mollie wants to know whom she most resembles, but I can't tell; she has blue eyes and brown hair, and three chins, and is very fat and happy; and at one time or another she has resembled all the different Clemenses and Langdons, in turn, that have ever lived.

Livy is too much beaten out with the baby, nights, to write, these times; and *I* don't know of anything urgent to say, except that a basket full of letters has accumulated in the 7 days that I have been whooping and cursing over a cold in the head—and I must attack the pile this very minute.

With love from us

Y aff

$25 enclosed. SAM.

On the completion of *The Prince and Pauper* story, Clemens had naturally sent it to Howells for consideration. Howells wrote: "I have read the two P's and I like it immensely, it begins well and it ends well." He pointed out some things that might be changed or omitted, and added: "It is such a book as I would expect from you, knowing what a bottom of fury there is to your fun." Clemens had thought somewhat of publishing the story anonymously, in the fear that it would not be accepted seriously over his own signature.

The "bull story" referred to in the next letter is the one later used in the *Joan of Arc* book, the story told Joan by "Uncle Laxart," how he rode a bull to a funeral.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Xmas Eve, 1880.

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I was prodigiously delighted with what you said about the book—so, on the whole, I've

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concluded to publish intrepidly, instead of concealing the authorship. I shall leave out that bull story.

I wish you had gone to New York. The company was small, and we had a first-rate time. Smith's an enjoyable fellow. I liked Barrett, too. And the oysters were as good as the rest of the company. It was worth going there to learn how to cook them.

Next day I attended to business—which was, to introduce Twichell to Gen. Grant and procure a private talk in the interest of the Chinese Educational Mission here in the U. S. Well, it was very funny. Joe had been sitting up nights building facts and arguments together into a mighty and unassailable array and had studied them out and got them by heart—all with the trembling half-hearted hope of getting Grant to add his signature to a sort of petition to the Viceroy of China; but Grant took in the whole situation in a jiffy, and before Joe had more than fairly got started, the old man said: "*I'll write the Viceroy a letter*—a separate letter—and bring strong reasons to bear upon him; I know him well, and what I say will have weight with him; I will attend to it right away. No, no thanks—I shall be *glad* to do it—it will be a labor of love."

So all Joe's laborious hours were for naught! It was as if he had come to borrow a dollar, and been offered a thousand before he could unfold his case. . . .

But it's getting dark. Merry Christmas to all of you.

Yrs Ever,

MARK.

The Chinese Educational Mission, mentioned in the foregoing, was a thriving Hartford institution, projected eight years before by a Yale graduate named Yung Wing. The mission was now threatened, and Yung Wing, knowing the high honor in which General Grant was held in China, believed that through him it might be saved. Twichell, of course, was deeply concerned and naturally overjoyed at Grant's interest. A day or two following the return to Hartford, Clemens received a letter from General Grant, in which he wrote: "Li Hung Chang is the

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most powerful and most influential Chinaman in his country. He professed great friendship for me when I was there, and I have had assurances of the same thing since. I hope, if he is strong enough with his government, that the decision to withdraw the Chinese students from this country may be changed."

But perhaps Li Hung Chang was experiencing one of his partial eclipses just then, or possibly he was not interested, for the Hartford Mission did not survive.

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XXI

LETTERS, 1881, TO HOWELLS AND OTHERS. ASSISTING A YOUNG SCULPTOR. LITERARY PLANS

WITH all of Mark Twain's admiration for Grant, he had opposed him as a third-term President and approved of the nomination of Garfield. He had made speeches for Garfield during the campaign just ended, and had been otherwise active in his support. Upon Garfield's election, however, he felt himself entitled to no special favor, and the single request which he preferred at length could hardly be classed as personal, though made for a "personal friend."

To President-elect James A. Garfield, in Washington:

HARTFORD, *Jany. 12, '81.*

GEN. GARFIELD

DEAR SIR,—Several times since your election persons wanting office have asked me "to use my influence" with you in their behalf.

To word it in that way was such a pleasant compliment to me that I never complied. I *could* not without exposing the fact that I hadn't any influence with you and that was a thing I had no mind to do.

It seems to me that it is better to have a good man's flattering estimate of my influence—and to keep it—than to fool it away with trying to get him an office. But when my brother—on my wife's side—Mr. Charles J. Langdon—late of the Chicago Convention—desires me to speak a word for Mr. Fred Douglass, I am not asked "to use my influence" consequently I am not risking anything. So I am writing this as a simple citizen. I am not drawing on my fund of influence at all. A simple

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citizen may express a desire with all propriety, in the matter of a recommendation to office, and so I beg permission to hope that you will retain Mr. Douglass in his present office of Marshall of the District of Columbia, if such a course will not clash with your own preferences or with the expediencies and interest of your administration. I offer this petition with peculiar pleasure and strong desire, because I so honor this man's high and blemishless character and so admire his brave, long crusade for the liberties and elevation of his race.

He is a personal friend of mine, but that is nothing to the point, his history would move me to say these things without that, and I feel them too.

With great respect
I am, General,
Yours truly,
S. L. CLEMENS.

Clemens would go out of his way any time to grant favor to the colored race. His childhood associations were partly accountable for this, but he also felt that the white man owed the negro a debt for generations of enforced bondage. He would lecture any time in a colored church, when he would as likely as not refuse point-blank to speak for a white congregation. Once, in Elmira, he received a request, poorly and none too politely phrased, to speak for one of the churches. He was annoyed and about to send a brief refusal, when Mrs. Clemens, who was present, said:

"I think I know that church, and if so this preacher is a colored man; he does not know how to write a polished letter—how should he?" Her husband's manner changed so suddenly that she added: "I will give you a motto, and it will be useful to you if you will adopt it: Consider every man colored until he is proved white."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Feb. 27, 1881.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I go to West Point with Twichell tomorrow, but shall be back Tuesday or Wednesday;

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and then just as soon thereafter as you and Mrs. Howells and Winny can come you will find us ready and most glad to see you—and the longer you can stay the gladder we shall be. I am not going to have a thing to do, but you shall work if you want to. On the evening of March 10th, I am going to read to the colored folk in the African Church here (no whites admitted except such as I bring with me), and a choir of colored folk will sing jubilee songs. I count on a good time, and shall hope to have you folks there, and Livy. I read in Twichell's chapel Friday night and had a most rattling high time—but the thing that went best of all was Uncle Remus's Tar Baby. I mean to try that on my dusky audience. They've all heard that tale from childhood—at least the older members have.

I arrived home in time to make a most noble blunder —invited Charley Warner here (in Livy's name) to dinner with the Gerhardts, and told him Livy had invited his wife *by letter* and by word of mouth also. I don't know where I got these impressions, but I came home feeling as one does who realizes that he has done a neat thing for *once* and left no flaws or loop-holes. Well, Livy said she had never told me to invite Charley and she hadn't dreamed of inviting Susy, and moreover there wasn't any dinner but just one lean duck. But Susy Warner's intuitions were correct—so she choked off Charley, and staid home herself—we waited dinner an hour and you ought to have seen that duck when he was done drying in the oven.

MARK.

Clemens and his wife were always privately assisting worthy and ambitious young people along the way of achievement. Young actors were helped through dramatic schools; young men and women were assisted through college and to travel abroad. Among others Clemens paid the way of two colored students, one through a Southern institution and another through the Yale law school.

The mention of the name of Gerhardt in the preceding letter

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introduces the most important, or at least the most extensive, of these benefactions. The following letter gives the beginning of the story:

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

Private and Confidential.

HARTFORD, *Feb. 21, 1881.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Well, here is our romance.

It happened in this way. One morning, a month ago —no, three weeks—Livy, and Clara Spaulding and I were at breakfast, at 10 A.M., and I was in an irritable mood, for the barber was up stairs waiting and his hot water getting cold, when the colored George returned from answering the bell and said: "There's a lady in the drawing-room wants to see you." "A book agent!" says I, with heat. "I won't see her; I will die in my tracks, first."

Then I got up with a soul full of rage, and went in there and bent scowling over that person, and began a succession of rude and raspy questions—and without even offering to sit down.

Not even the defendant's youth and beauty and (seeming) timidity were able to modify my savagery, for a time—and meantime question and answer were going on. She had risen to her feet with the first question; and there she stood, with her pretty face bent floorward whilst I inquired, but always with her honest eyes looking me in the face when it came her turn to answer.

And this was her tale, and her plea—diffidently stated, but straightforwardly; and bravely, and most winningly simply and earnestly: I put it in my own fashion, for I do not remember her words:

Mr. Karl Gerhardt, who works in Pratt & Whitney's machine shops, has made a statue in clay, and would I be so kind as to come and look at it, and tell him if there is any promise in it? He has none to go to, and he would be so glad.

"O, dear me," I said, "I don't know anything about art—there's nothing *I* could tell him."

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But she went on, just as earnestly and as simply as before, with her plea—and so she did after repeated rebuffs; and dull as I am, even *I* began by and by to admire this brave and gentle persistence, and to perceive how her heart of hearts was in this thing, and how she *couldn't* give it up, but *must carry* her point. So at last I wavered, and promised in general terms that I would come down the first day that fell idle—and as I conducted her to the door, I tamed more and more, and said I would come during the very next week—"We shall be so glad—but —but, would you please come early in the week?—the statue is just finished and we are *so* anxious—and—and —we did hope you could come this week—and"—well, I came down another peg, and said I would come Monday, as sure as death; and before I got to the dining room remorse was doing its work and I was saying to myself, "Damnation, how can a man be such a hound?—why didn't I go with her *now?*" Yes, and how mean I should have felt if I had known that out of her poverty she had hired a hack and brought it along to convey me. But luckily for what was left of my peace of mind, I didn't know that.

Well, it appears that from here she went to Charley Warner's. There was a better light, there, and the eloquence of her face had a better chance to do its office. Warner fought, as I had done; and he was in the midst of an article and very busy; but no matter, she won him completely. He laid aside his MS and said, "Come, let us go and see your father's statue. That is—is he your father?" "No, he is my husband." So this child was married, you see.

This was a Saturday. Next day Warner came to dinner and said "*Go!*—go tomorrow—don't fail." He was in love with the girl, and with her husband too, and said he believed there was merit in the statue. Pretty crude work, maybe, but merit in it.

Patrick and I hunted up the place, next day; the girl saw us driving up, and flew down the stairs and received

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me. Her quarters were the second story of a little wooden house—another family on the ground floor. The husband was at the machine shop, the wife kept no servant, she was there alone. She had a little parlor, with a chair or two and a sofa; and the artist-husband's hand was visible in a couple of plaster busts, one of the wife, and another of a neighbor's child; visible also in a couple of water colors of flowers and birds; an ambitious unfinished portrait of his wife in oils: some paint decorations on the pine mantel; and an excellent human ear, done in some plastic material at 16.

Then we went into the kitchen, and the girl flew around, with enthusiasm, and snatched rag after rag from a tall something in the corner, and presently there stood the clay statue, life size—a graceful girlish creature, nude to the waist, and holding up a single garment with one hand —the expression attempted being a modified scare—she was interrupted when about to enter the bath.

Then this young wife posed herself alongside the image and so remained—a thing I didn't understand. But presently I did—then I said:

"O, it's *you!*"

"Yes," she said, "I was the model. He has no model but me. I have stood for this many and many an hour —and you can't think how it does tire one! But I don't mind it. He works all day at the shop; and then, nights and Sundays he works on his statue as long as I can keep up."

She got a big chisel, to use as a lever, and between us we managed to twist the pedestal round and round, so as to afford a view of the statue from all points. Well, sir, it was perfectly charming, this girl's innocence and purity—exhibiting her naked self, as it were, to a stranger and alone, and never once dreaming that there was the slightest indelicacy about the matter. And so there wasn't; but it will be many a long day before I run across another woman who can do the like and show no trace of self-consciousness.

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Well, then we sat down, and I took a smoke, and she told me all about her people in Massachusetts—her father is a physician and it is an old and respectable family—(I am able to believe anything she says.) And she told me how "Karl" is 26 years old; and how he has had passionate longings all his life toward art, but has always been poor and obliged to struggle for his daily bread; and how he felt sure that if he could only have *one* or *two* lessons in——

"Lessons? Hasn't he had any lessons?"

No. He had never had a lesson.

And presently it was dinner time and "Karl" arrived —a slender young fellow with a marvelous head and a noble eye—and he was as simple and natural, and as beautiful in spirit as his wife was. But *she* had to do the talking—mainly—there was too much thought behind his cavernous eyes for glib speech.

I went home enchanted. Told Livy and Clara Spaulding all about the paradise down yonder where those two enthusiasts are happy with a yearly expense of $350. Livy and Clara went there next day and came away enchanted. A few nights later the Gerhardts kept their promise and came here for the evening. It was billiard night and I had company and so was not down; but Livy and Clara became more charmed with these children than ever.

Warner and I planned to get somebody to criticise the statue whose judgment would be worth something. So I laid for Champney, and after two failures I captured him and took him around, and he said "this statue is full of faults—but it has merits enough in it to make up for them"—whereat the young wife danced around as delighted as a child. When we came away, Champney said, "I did not want to say too much there, but the truth is, it seems to me an extraordinary performance for an untrained hand. You ask if there is promise enough there to justify the Hartford folk in going to an expense of training this young man. *I* should say, *yes*, decidedly;

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but still, to make everything safe, you had better get the judgment of a sculptor."

Warner was in New York. I wrote him, and he said he would fetch up Ward—which he did. Yesterday they went to the Gerhardts and spent two hours, and Ward came away bewitched with those people and marveling at the winning innocence of the young wife, who dropped naturally into model-attitude beside the statue (which is stark naked from head to heel, now—G. had removed the drapery, fearing Ward would think he was afraid to try legs and hips) just as she has always done before.

Livy and I had two long talks with Ward yesterday evening. He spoke strongly. He said, "if any stranger had told me that this apprentice did not model that thing from plaster casts, I would not have believed it." He said "it is full of crudities, but it is full of genius, too. It is such a statue as the man of average talent would achieve after two years training in the schools. And the *boldness* of the fellow, in going straight to *nature!* He is an apprentice—his work shows that, all over; but the stuff is in him, sure. Hartford must send him to Paris —two years; then if the promise holds good, keep him there three more—and warn him to study, study, work, work, and keep his name out of the papers, and neither ask for orders nor accept them when offered."

Well, you see, that's all *we* wanted. After Ward was gone Livy came out with the thing that was in her mind. She said, "Go privately and start the Gerhardts off to Paris, and say nothing about it to any one else."

So I tramped down this morning in the snow-storm—and there was a stirring time. They will sail a week or ten days from now.

As I was starting out at the front door, with Gerhardt beside me and the young wife dancing and jubilating behind, this latter cried out impulsively, "Tell Mrs. Clemens I want to hug her—I want to hug you *both!*"

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I gave them my old French book and they were going to tackle the language, straight off.

Now this letter is a secret—keep it quiet—I don't think Livy would mind my telling you these things, but then she might, you know, for she is a queer girl.

Yrs ever,

MARK.

Champney was J. Wells Champney, a portrait-painter of distinction; Ward was the sculptor, J. Q. A. Ward.

The Gerhardts were presently off to Paris, well provided with means to make their dreams reality; in due time the letters will report them again.

The Uncle Remus tales of Joel Chandler Harris gave Mark Twain great pleasure. He frequently read them aloud, not only at home but in public. Finally, he wrote Harris, expressing his warm appreciation, and mentioning one of the negro stories of his own childhood, "The Golden Arm," which he urged Harris to look up and add to his collection.

"You have pinned a proud feather in Uncle Remus's cap," replied Harris. "I do not know what higher honor he could have than to appear before the Hartford public arm in arm with Mark Twain."

He disclaimed any originality for the stories, adding, "I understand that my relations toward Uncle Remus are similar to those that exist between an almanac maker and the calendar." He had not heard the "Golden Arm" story and asked for the outlines; also for some publishing advice, out of Mark Twain's long experience.

To Joel Chandler Harris, in Atlanta:

ELMIRA, N. Y., *Aug. 10.*

MY DEAR MR. HARRIS,—You can argue *yourself* into the delusion that the principle of life is in the stories themselves and not in their setting; but you will save labor by stopping with that solitary convert, for he is the only intelligent one you will bag. In reality the stories are only alligator pears—one merely eats them for the sake of the salad-dressing. Uncle Remus is most deftly

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drawn, and is a lovable and delightful creation; he, and the little boy, and their relations with each other, are high and fine literature, and worthy to live, for their own sakes; and certainly the stories are not to be credited with *them*. But enough of this; I seem to be proving to the man that made the multiplication table that twice one are two.

I have been thinking, yesterday and to-day (plenty of chance to think, as I am abed with lumbago at our little summering farm among the solitudes of the Mountain-tops,) and I have concluded that I can answer one of your questions with full confidence—thus: Make it a subscription book. Mighty few books that come strictly under the head of *literature* will sell by subscription; but if Uncle Remus won't, the gift of prophecy has departed out of me. When a book *will* sell by subscription, it will sell two or three times as many copies as it would in the trade; and the profit is bulkier because the retail price is greater. . . .

You didn't ask me for a subscription-publisher. If you had, I should have recommended Osgood to you. He inaugurates his subscription department with my new book in the fall. . . .

Now the doctor has been here and tried to interrupt my yarn about "The Golden Arm," but I've got through, anyway.

Of course I *tell* it in the negro dialect—that is necessary; but I have not written it so, for I can't spell it in your matchless way. It is marvelous the way you and Cable spell the negro and creole dialects.

Two grand features are lost in print: the weird wailing, the rising and falling cadences of the wind, so easily mimicked with one's mouth; and the impressive pauses and eloquent silences, and subdued utterances, toward the end of the yarn (which chain the attention of the children hand and foot, and they sit with parted lips and breathless, to be wrenched limb from limb with the sudden and appalling "You got it").

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Old Uncle Dan'l, a slave of my uncle's[1] aged 60, used to tell us children yarns every night by the kitchen fire (no other light;) and the last yarn demanded, every night, was this one. By this time there was but a ghastly blaze or two flickering about the back-log. We would huddle close about the old man, and begin to shudder with the first familiar words; and under the spell of his impressive delivery we always fell a prey to that climax at the end when the rigid black shape in the twilight sprang at us with a shout.

When you come to glance at the tale you will recollect it—it is as common and familiar as the Tar Baby. Work up the atmosphere with your customary skill and it will "go" in print.

Lumbago seems to make a body garrulous—but you'll forgive it.

Truly yours

S. L. CLEMENS.

The "Golden Arm" story was one that Clemens often used in his public readings, and was very effective as he gave it.

In his sketch, "How to Tell a Story,"[2] it appears about as he used to tell it. Harris, receiving the outlines of the old Missouri tale, presently announced that he had dug up its Georgia relative, an interesting variant, as we gather from Mark Twain's reply.

To Joel Chandler Harris, in Atlanta:

HARTFORD, '81.

MY DEAR MR. HARRIS,—I was very sure you would run across that Story somewhere, and am glad you have. A Drummond light—no, I mean a Brush light—is thrown upon the negro estimate of values by his willingness to risk his soul and his mighty peace forever for the sake of a silver sev'm-punce. And this form of the story seems

[1] According to Orion Clemens, ten years older; it was their own man-of-all-work, "Uncle Ned."

[2] Included in the Uniform Edition of Mark Twain's works.

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rather nearer the true field-hand standard than that achieved by my Florida, Mo., negroes with their sumptuous arm of solid gold.

I judge you haven't received my new book yet—however, you will in a day or two. Meantime you must not take it ill if I drop Osgood a hint about your proposed story of slave life. . . .

When you come north I wish you would drop me a line and then follow it in person and give me a day or two at our house in Hartford. If you will, I will snatch Osgood down from Boston, and you won't have to go there at all unless you want to. Please to bear this strictly in mind, and don't forget it.

Sincerely yours

S. L. CLEMENS.

Charles Warren Stoddard, to whom the next letter is written, was one of the old California literary crowd, a graceful writer of verse and prose, never quite arriving at the success believed by his friends to be his due. He was a gentle, irresponsible soul, well loved by all who knew him, and always, by one or another, provided against want. The reader may remember that during Mark Twain's great lecture engagement in London, winter of 1873–74, Stoddard lived with him, acting as his secretary. At a later period in his life he lived for several years with the great telephone magnate, Theodore N. Vail. At the time of this letter, Stoddard had decided that in the warm light and comfort of the Sandwich Islands he could survive on his literary earnings.

To Charles Warren Stoddard, in the Sandwich Islands:

HARTFORD, *Oct. 26 '81.*

MY DEAR CHARLIE,—Now what have I ever done to you that you should not only slide off to Heaven before you have earned a right to go, but must add the gratuitous villainy of informing me of it? . . .

The house is full of carpenters and decorators; whereas, what we really need here, is an incendiary. If the house

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would only burn down, we would pack up the cubs and fly to the isles of the blest, and shut ourselves up in the healing solitudes of the crater of Haleakala and get a good rest; for the mails do not intrude there, nor yet the telephone and the telegraph. And after resting, we would come down the mountain a piece and board with a godly, breech-clouted native, and eat poi and dirt and give thanks to whom all thanks belong, for these privileges, and never house-keep any more.

I think my wife would be twice as strong as she is, but for this wearing and wearying slavery of house-keeping. However, she thinks she must submit to it for the sake of the children; whereas, I have always had a tenderness for parents too, so, for her sake and mine, I sigh for the incendiary. When the evening comes and the gas is lit and the wear and tear of life ceases, we want to keep house always; but next morning we wish, once more, that we were free and irresponsible boarders.

Work?—one *can't* you know, to any purpose. I don't really get anything done worth speaking of, except during the three or four months that we are away in the Summer. I wish the Summer were seven years long. I keep three or four books on the stocks all the time, but I seldom add a satisfactory chapter to one of them at home. Yes, and it is all because my time is taken up with answering the letters of strangers. It can't be done through a short hand amanuensis—I've tried that—it wouldn't work—I couldn't learn to dictate. What does possess strangers to write so many letters? I never could find that out. However, I suppose I did it myself when I was a stranger. But I will never do it again.

Maybe you think I am not happy? the very thing that gravels me is that I am. I don't want to be happy when I can't work; I am resolved that hereafter I won't be. What I have always longed for, was the privilege of living forever away up on one of those mountains in the Sandwich Islands overlooking the sea.

Yours ever MARK.

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That magazine article of yours was mighty good: up to your very best I think. I enclose a book review written by Howells.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Oct. 26 '81.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I am delighted with your review, and so is Mrs. Clemens. What you have said, there, will convince anybody that reads it; a body cannot *help* being convinced by it. That is the kind of a review to have; the doubtful man, even the prejudiced man, is persuaded and succumbs.

What a queer blunder that was, about the baronet. I can't quite see how I ever made it. There was an opulent abundance of things I *didn't* know; and consequently no need to trench upon the vest-pocketful of things I *did* know, to get material for a blunder.

Charley Warren Stoddard has gone to the Sandwich Islands permanently. Lucky devil. It is the only supremely delightful place on earth. It does seem that the more advantage a body doesn't earn, here, the more of them God throws at his head. This fellow's postal card has set the vision of those gracious islands before my mind, again, with not a leaf withered, nor a rainbow vanished, nor a sun-flash missing from the waves, and now it will be months, I reckon, before I can drive it away again. It is beautiful company, but it makes one restless and dissatisfied.

With love and thanks,

Yrs ever,

MARK.

The review mentioned in this letter was of *The Prince and the Pauper*. What the queer "blunder" about the baronet was, the present writer confesses he does not know; but perhaps a careful reader could find it, at least in the early edition; very likely it was corrected without loss of time.

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Clemens now and then found it necessary to pay a visit to Canada in the effort to protect his copyright. He usually had a grand time on these trips, being lavishly entertained by the Canadian literary fraternity. In November, 1881, he made one of these journeys in the interest of *The Prince and the Pauper*, this time with Osgood, who was now his publisher. In letters written home we get a hint of his diversions. The Monsieur Frechette mentioned was a Canadian poet of considerable distinction. "Clara" was Miss Clara Spaulding, of Elmira, who had accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Clemens to Europe in 1873, and again in 1878. Later she became Mrs. John B. Stanchfield, of New York City. Her name has already appeared in these letters many times.

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

MONTREAL, *Nov. 28 '81.*

Livy darling, you and Clara ought to have been at breakfast in the great dining room this morning. English female faces, distinctive English costumes, strange and marvelous English gaits—and yet such honest, honorable, clean-souled countenances, just as these English women almost always have, you know. Right away—

But they've come to take me to the top of Mount Royal, it being a cold, dry, sunny, magnificent day. Going in a sleigh.

Yours lovingly,

SAML.

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

MONTREAL, *Sunday, November 27, 1881.*

Livy dear, a mouse kept me awake last night till 3 or 4 o'clock—so I am lying abed this morning. I would not give sixpence to be out yonder in the storm, although it is only snow.

[The above paragraph is written in the form of a rebus illustrated with various sketches.]

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Montreal, Sunday. 27, 1881

(The blank means that there is no remember there.)

, A [blank] kept me awake

night till 3 or 4 o'

— so

lying a-

this morning

I would

give

Yonder in the

although it is only snow.

There — that's for the children — was not sure that they could read writing, especially Jean, who is strongly ignorant in some things.

A REBUS-LETTER SENT BY MARK TWAIN TO HIS WIFE

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There—that's for the children—was not sure that they could read writing; especially Jean, who is strangely ignorant in some things.

I can not only look out upon the beautiful snow-storm, past the vigorous blaze of my fire; and upon the snow-veiled buildings which I have sketched; and upon the churchward drifting umbrellas; and upon the buffalo-clad cabmen stamping their feet and thrashing their arms on the corner yonder: but I also look out upon the spot where the first white men stood, in the neighborhood of four hundred years ago, admiring the mighty stretch of leafy solitudes, and being admired and marveled at by an eager multitude of naked savages. The discoverer of this region, and namer of it, Jacques Cartier, has a square named for him in the city. I wish you were here; you would enjoy your birthday, I think.

I hoped for a letter, and thought I had one when the mail was handed in, a minute ago, but it was only that note from Sylvester Baxter. You must write—do you hear?—or I will be remiss myself.

Give my love and a kiss to the children, and ask them to give you my love and a kiss from

SAML.

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

QUEBEC, *Sunday. '81.*

Livy darling, I received a letter from Monsieur Frechette this morning, in which certain citizens of Montreal tendered me a public dinner next Thursday, and by Osgood's advice I accepted it. I would have accepted anyway, and very cheerfully but for the delay of two days—for I was purposing to go to Boston Tuesday and home Wednesday; whereas, now I go to Boston Friday and home Saturday. I have to go by Boston on account of business.

We drove about the steep hills and narrow, crooked streets of this old town during three hours, yesterday, in a sleigh, in a driving snow-storm. The people here

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don't mind snow; they were all out, plodding around on their affairs—especially the children, who were wallowing around everywhere, like snow images, and having a mighty good time. I wish I could describe the winter costume of the young girls, but I can't. It is grave and simple, but graceful and pretty—the top of it is a brimless fur cap. Maybe it is the costume that makes pretty girls seem so monotonously plenty here. It was a kind of relief to strike a homely face occasionally.

You descend into some of the streets by long, deep stairways; and in the strong moonlight, last night, these were very picturesque. I did wish you were here to see these things. You couldn't by any possibility sleep in these beds, though, or enjoy the food.

Good night, sweetheart, and give my respects to the cubs.

SAML.

It had been hoped that W. D. Howells would join the Canadian excursion, but Howells was not very well that autumn. He wrote that he had been in bed five weeks, "most of the time recovering; so you see how bad I must have been to begin with. But now I am out of any first-class pain; I have a good appetite, and I am as abusive and peremptory as Guiteau." Clemens, returning to Hartford, wrote him a letter that explains itself.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Dec. 16 '81.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—It was a sharp disappointment—your inability to connect, on the Canadian raid. What a gaudy good time we should have had!

Disappointed, again, when I got back to Boston; for I was promising myself half an hour's look at you, in Belmont; but your note to Osgood showed that that could not be allowed out yet.

The Atlantic arrived an hour ago, and your faultless and delicious Police Report brought that blamed Joe Twichell powerfully before me. *There's* a man who can

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tell such things himself (by word of mouth,) and has as sure an eye for detecting a thing that is before his eyes, as any man in the world, perhaps—then why in the nation doesn't he report himself with a pen?

One of those drenching days last week, he slopped down town with his cubs, and visited a poor little beggarly shed where were a dwarf, a fat woman, and a giant of honest eight feet, on exhibition behind tawdry show-canvases, but with nobody to exhibit to. The giant had a broom, and was cleaning up and fixing around, diligently. Joe conceived the idea of getting some talk out of him. Now that *never* would have occurred to me. So he dropped in under the man's elbow, dogged him patiently around, prodding him with questions and getting irritated snarls in return which would have finished me early—but at last one of Joe's random shafts drove the centre of that giant's sympathies somehow, and fetched him. The fountains of his great deep were broken up, and he rained a flood of personal history that was unspeakably entertaining.

Among other things it turned out that he had been a Turkish (native) colonel, and had fought all through the Crimean war—and so, for the first time, Joe got a picture of the Charge of the Six Hundred that made him *see* the living spectacle, the flash of flag and tongue-flame, the rolling smoke, and hear the booming of the guns; and for the first time also, he heard the reasons for that wild charge delivered from the mouth of a master, and realized that nobody had "blundered," but that a cold, logical, military brain had perceived this one and sole way to win an already lost battle, and so gave the command and did achieve the victory.

And mind you Joe was able to come up here, days afterwards, and reproduce that giant's picturesque and admirable history. But dern him, he can't *write* it—which is all wrong, and not as it should be.

And he has gone and raked up the MS autobiography (written in 1848,) of Mrs. Phebe Brown, (author of "I Love to Steal a While Away,") who educated Yung Wing

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in her family when he was a little boy; and I came near not getting to bed at all, last night, on account of the lurid fascinations of it. Why in the nation it has never got into print, I can't understand.

But, by jings! the postman will be here in a minute; so, congratulations upon your mending health, and gratitude that it is mending;—and love to you all.

Yrs Ever

MARK.

Don't answer—I spare the sick.

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XXII

LETTERS, 1882, MAINLY TO HOWELLS. WASTED FURY OLD SCENES REVISITED. THE MISSISSIPPI BOOK

A MAN of Mark Twain's profession and prominence must necessarily be the subject of much newspaper comment. Jest, compliment, criticism—none of these things disturbed him, as a rule. He was pleased that his books should receive favorable notices by men whose opinion he respected, but he was not grieved by adverse expressions. Jests at his expense, if well written, usually amused him; cheap jokes only made him sad; but sarcasms and innuendoes were likely to enrage him, particularly if he believed them prompted by malice. Perhaps among all the letters he ever wrote, there is none more characteristic than this confession of violence and eagerness for reprisal, followed by his acknowledgment of error and a manifest appreciation of his own weakness. It should be said that Mark Twain and Whitelaw Reid were generally very good friends, and perhaps for the moment this fact seemed to magnify the offense.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

HARTFORD, *Jan. 28 '82.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Nobody knows better than I, that there are times when swearing cannot meet the emergency. How sharply I feel that, at this moment. Not a single profane word has issued from my lips this morning—I have not even had the *impulse* to swear, so wholly ineffectual would swearing have manifestly been, in the circumstances. But I will tell you about it.

About three weeks ago, a sensitive friend, approaching his revelation cautiously, intimated that the N. Y. Tribune was engaged in a kind of crusade against me. This seemed

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a higher compliment than I deserved; but no matter, it made me very angry. I asked many questions, and gathered, in substance, this: Since Reid's return from Europe, the Tribune had been flinging sneers and brutalities at me with such persistent frequency "as to attract general remark." I was an angered—which is just as good an expression, I take it, as an hungered. Next, I learned that Osgood, among the rest of the "general," was worrying over these constant and pitiless attacks. Next came the testimony of another friend, that the attacks were not merely "frequent," but "almost *daily*." Reflect upon that: "Almost *daily*" insults, for two months on a stretch. What would *you* have done?

As for me, I did the thing which was the natural thing for me to do, that is, I set about contriving a plan to accomplish one or the other of two things: 1. Force a peace; or 2. Get revenge. When I got my plan finished, it pleased me marvelously. It was in six or seven sections, each section to be used in its turn and by itself; the assault to begin at once with No. 1, and the rest to follow, one after the other, to keep the communication open while I wrote my biography of Reid. I meant to wind up with this latter great work, and then dismiss the subject for good.

Well, ever since then I have worked day and night making notes and collecting and classifying material. I've got collectors at work in England. I went to New York and sat three hours taking evidence while a stenographer set it down. As my labors grew, so also grew my fascination. Malice and malignity faded out of me—or maybe I *drove* them out of me, knowing that a malignant book would hurt nobody but the fool who wrote it. I got thoroughly in love with this work; for I saw that I was going to write a book which the very devils and angels themselves would delight to read, and which would draw disapproval from nobody but the hero of it, (and Mrs. Clemens, who was bitter against the whole thing.) One part of my plan was so delicious that I *had* to try my hand on it right

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away, just for the luxury of it. I set about it, and sure enough it panned out to admiration. I wrote that chapter most carefully, and I couldn't find a fault with it. (It was not for the biography—no, it belonged to an immediate and deadlier project.)

Well, five days ago, this thought came into my mind—(from Mrs. Clemens's): "Wouldn't it be well to make *sure* that the attacks have been 'almost daily'?—and to also make sure that their number and character will justify me in doing what I am proposing to do?"

I at once set a man to work in New York to seek out and copy every unpleasant reference which had been made to me in the Tribune from Nov. 1st to date. On my own part I began to watch the current numbers, for I had subscribed for the paper.

The result arrived from my New York man this morning. O, what a pitiable wreck of high hopes! The "almost daily" assaults, for two months, consist of—1. Adverse criticism of P. & P. from an enraged idiot in the London Atheneum; 2, Paragraph from some indignant Englishman in the Pall Mall Gazette who pays me the vast compliment of gravely rebuking some imaginary ass who has set me up in the neighborhood of Rabelais; 3, A remark of the Tribune's about the Montreal dinner, touched with an almost invisible satire; 4, A remark of the Tribune's about refusal of Canadian copyright, not complimentary, but not necessarily malicious—and of course adverse criticism which is not malicious is a thing which none but fools irritate themselves about.

There—that is the prodigious bugaboo, in its entirety! Can you conceive of a man's getting himself into a sweat over so diminutive a provocation? I am sure I can't. What the devil can those friends of mine have been thinking about, to spread these 3 or 4 harmless things out into two months of daily sneers and affronts? The whole offense, boiled down, amounts to just this: one uncourteous remark of the Tribune about my *book*—not me—between Nov. 1 and Dec. 20; and a couple of foreign

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criticisms (of my writings, not me,) between Nov. 1 and Jan. 26! If I can't stand that amount of friction, I certainly need reconstruction. Further boiled down, this vast outpouring of malice amounts to simply this: *one* jest from the Tribune (one can make nothing more serious than that out of it.) *One jest*—and that is all; for the foreign criticisms do not count, they being matters of news, and proper for publication in anybody's newspaper.

And to offset that one jest, the Tribune paid me one compliment Dec. 23, by publishing my note declining the New York New England dinner, while merely (in the same breath,) *mentioning* that similar letters were read from General Sherman and other men whom we all know to be persons of *real* consequence.

Well, my mountain has brought forth its mouse, and a sufficiently small mouse it is, God knows. And my three weeks' hard work have got to go into the ignominious pigeon-hole. Confound it, I could have earned ten thousand dollars with infinitely less trouble. However, I shouldn't have done it, for I am too lazy, now, in my sere and yellow leaf, to be willing to work for anything but love. . . . I kind of envy you people who are permitted for your righteousness' sake to dwell in a boarding house; not that I should *always* want to live in one, but I should like the change occasionally from this housekeeping slavery to that wild independence. A life of don't-care-a-damn in a boarding house is what I have asked for in many a secret prayer. I shall come by and by and require of you what you have offered me there.

Yours ever,

MARK.

Howells, who had already known something of the gathering storm, replied: "Your letter was an immense relief to me, for although I had an abiding faith that you would get sick of your enterprise, I wasn't easy until I knew that you had given it up."

Joel Chandler Harris appears again in the letters of this period. Twichell, during a trip South about this time, had

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called on Harris with some sort of proposition or suggestion from Clemens that Harris appear with him in public, and tell, or read, the Remus stories from the platform. But Harris was abnormally diffident. Clemens later pronounced him "the shyest full-grown man" he had ever met, and the word which Twichell brought home evidently did not encourage the platform idea.

To Joel Chandler Harris, in Atlanta:

HARTFORD, *Apl. 2, '82.*

Private.

MY DEAR MR. HARRIS,—Jo Twichell brought me your note and told me of his talk with you. He said you didn't believe you would ever be able to muster a sufficiency of reckless daring to make you comfortable and at ease before an audience. Well, I have thought out a device whereby I believe we can get around that difficulty. I will explain when I see you.

Jo says you want to go to Canada within a month or six weeks—I forget just exactly what he *did* say; but he intimated that that trip could be delayed a while, if necessary. If this is so, suppose you meet Osgood and me in New Orleans early in May—say somewhere between the 1st and 6th?

It will be well worth your while to do this, because the author who goes to Canada unposted, will not know what course to pursue [to secure copyright] when he gets there; he will find himself in a hopeless confusion as to what is the correct thing to do. Now Osgood is the only man in America who can lay out your course for you and tell you exactly what to do. Therefore, you just come to New Orleans and have a talk with him.

Our idea is to strike across lots and reach St. Louis the 20th of April—thence we propose to drift southward, stopping at some town a few hours or a night, every day, and making notes.

To escape the interviewers, I shall follow my usual course and use a fictitious name (*C. L. Samuel, of New*

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York.) I don't know what Osgood's name will be, but he can't use his own.

If you see your way to meet us in New Orleans, drop me a line, now, and as we approach that city I will telegraph you what day we shall arrive there.

I would go to Atlanta if I could, but shan't be able. We shall go back up the river to St. Paul, and thence by rail X-lots home.

(I am making this letter so dreadfully private and confidential because my movements must be kept secret, else I shan't be able to pick up the kind of book-material I want.)

If you are diffident, I suspect that you ought to let Osgood be your magazine-agent. He makes those people pay three or four times as much as an article is worth, whereas I never had the cheek to make them pay more than double.

Yrs Sincerely

S. L. CLEMENS.

"My backwardness is an affliction," wrote Harris. . . . "The ordeal of appearing on the stage would be a terrible one, but my experience is that when a diffident man does become familiar with his surroundings he has more impudence than his neighbors. Extremes meet."

He was sorely tempted, but his courage became as water at the thought of footlights and assembled listeners. Once in New York he appears to have been caught unawares at a Tile Club dinner and made to tell a story, but his agony was such that at the prospect of a similar ordeal in Boston he avoided that city and headed straight for Georgia and safety.

The New Orleans excursion with Osgood, as planned by Clemens, proved a great success. The little party took the steamer *Gold Dust* from St. Louis down river toward New Orleans. Clemens was quickly recognized, of course, and his assumed name laid aside. The author of "Uncle Remus" made the trip to New Orleans. George W. Cable was there at the time, and we may believe that in the company of Mark Twain and Osgood those Southern authors passed two or three delightful days. Clemens also met his old teacher Bixby in New Orleans,

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and came back up the river with him, spending most of his time in the pilot-house, as in the old days. It was a glorious trip, and, reaching St. Louis, he continued it northward, stopping off at Hannibal and Quincy.[1]

To Mrs. Clemens, in Hartford:

QUINCY, ILL. *May 17, '82.*

Livy darling, I am desperately homesick. But I have promised Osgood, and must stick it out; otherwise I would take the train at once and break for home.

I have spent three delightful days in Hannibal, loitering around all day long, examining the old localities and talking with the grey-heads who were boys and girls with me 30 or 40 years ago. It has been a moving time. I spent my nights with John and Helen Garth, three miles from town, in their spacious and beautiful house. They were children with me, and afterwards schoolmates. Now they have a daughter 19 or 20 years old. Spent an hour, yesterday, with A. W. Lamb, who was not married when I saw him last. He married a young lady whom I knew. And now I have been talking with their grown-up sons and daughters. Lieutenant Hickman, the spruce young handsomely-uniformed volunteer of 1846, called on me—a grisly elephantine patriarch of 65 now, his grace all vanished.

That world which I knew in its blossoming youth is old and bowed and melancholy, now; its soft cheeks are leathery and wrinkled, the fire is gone out in its eyes, and the spring from its step. It will be dust and ashes when I come again. I have been clasping hands with the moribund—and usually they said, "It is for the last time."

Now I am under way again, upon this hideous trip to St. Paul, with a heart brimming full of thoughts and images of you and Susie and Bay and the peerless Jean. And so good night, my love.

SAML.

[1] Mark Twain, in *Life on the Mississippi*, tells characteristically of the river revisited. A brief historical account of it appears in *Mark Twain: A Biography*, by the present writer, chap. cxl.

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Clemens's trip had been saddened by learning, in New Orleans, the news of the death of Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh. To Doctor Brown's son, whom he had known as "Jock," he wrote immediately on his return to Hartford.

To Mr. John Brown, in Edinburgh:

HARTFORD, *June 1, 1882.*

MY DEAR MR. BROWN,—I was three thousand miles from home, at breakfast in New Orleans, when the damp morning paper revealed the sorrowful news among the cable dispatches. There was no place in America, however remote, or however rich, or poor or high or humble where words of mourning for your father were not uttered that morning, for his works had made him known and loved all over the land. To Mrs. Clemens and me, the loss is personal; and our grief the grief one feels for one who was peculiarly near and dear. Mrs. Clemens has never ceased to express regret that we came away from England the last time without going to see him, and often we have since projected a voyage across the Atlantic for the sole purpose of taking him by the hand and looking into his kind eyes once more before he should be called to his rest.

We both thank you greatly for the Edinburgh papers which you sent. My wife and I join in affectionate remembrances and greetings to yourself and your aunt, and in the sincere tender of our sympathies.

Faithfully yours,

S. L. CLEMENS.

Our Susie is still "Megalops." He gave her that name.

Can you spare a photograph of your father? We have none but the one taken in a group with ourselves.

William Dean Howells, at the age of forty-five, reached what many still regard his highest point of achievement in American realism. His novel, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, which was running

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as a *Century* serial during the summer of 1882, attracted wide attention, and upon its issue in book form took first place among his published novels. Mark Twain, to the end of his life, loved all that Howells wrote. Once, long afterward, he said: "Most authors give us *glimpses* of a radiant moon, but Howells's moon shines and sails all night long." When the instalments of *The Rise of Silas Lapham* began to appear, he overflowed in adjectives, the sincerity of which we need not doubt, in view of his quite open criticisms of the author's reading delivery.

To W. D. Howells, in Belmont, Mass.:

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I am in a state of wild enthusiasm over this July instalment of your story. It's perfectly dazzling—it's masterly—incomparable. Yet I heard you read it—without losing my balance. Well, the difference between your reading and your writing is—remarkable. I mean, in the effects produced and the impression left behind. Why, the one is to the other as is one of Joe Twichell's yarns repeated by a somnambulist. Goodness gracious, you read me a chapter, and it is a gentle, pearly dawn, with a sprinkle of faint stars in it; but by and by I strike it in print, and shout to myself, "God bless us, how *has* that pallid former spectacle been turned into these gorgeous sunset splendors!"

Well, I don't care how much you read your truck to me, you can't permanently damage it for me that way. It is always perfectly fresh and dazzling when I come on it in the magazine. Of course I recognize the *form* of it as being familiar—but that is all. That is, I remember it as pyrotechnic figures which you set up before me, dead and cold, but ready for the match—and *now* I see them touched off and all ablaze with blinding fires. You *can* read, if you want to, but you don't read worth a damn. I know you *can* read, because your readings of Cable and your repeatings of the German doctor's remarks prove that.

That's the best drunk scene—because the truest—that I ever read. There are touches in it that I never saw any

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writer take note of before. And they are set before the reader with amazing accuracy. How very drunk, and how recently drunk, and how altogether admirably drunk you must have been to enable you to contrive that masterpiece!

Why I didn't notice that that religious interview between Marcia and Mrs. Halleck was so deliciously humorous when you read it to me—but dear me, it's just too lovely for anything. (Wrote Clark to collar it for the "Library.")

Hang it, I know where the mystery is, now; When you are reading, you glide right along, and I don't get a chance to let the things soak home; but when I catch it in the magazine, I give a page 20 or 30 minutes in which to gently and thoroughly filter into me. Your humor is so very subtle, and elusive—(well, often it's just a vanishing breath of perfume which a body isn't certain he smelt till he stops and takes another smell) whereas you can smell other

(Remainder obliterated.)

Among Mark Twain's old schoolmates in Hannibal was little Helen Kercheval, for whom in those early days he had a very tender spot indeed. But she married another schoolmate, John Garth, who in time became a banker, highly respected and a great influence. John and Helen Garth have already been mentioned in the letter of May 17th.

To John Garth, in Hannibal:

HARTFORD, *July 3 '82.*

DEAR JOHN,—Your letter of June 19 arrived just one day after we ought to have been in Elmira, N. Y. for the summer: but at the last moment the baby was seized with scarlet fever. I had to telegraph and countermand the order for special sleeping car; and in fact we all had to fly around in a lively way and undo the patient preparations of weeks—rehabilitate the dismantled house, unpack the trunks, and so on. A couple of days later,

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the eldest child was taken down with so fierce a fever that she was soon delirious—not scarlet fever, however. Next, I myself was stretched on the bed with three diseases at once, and all of them fatal. But I never did care for fatal diseases if I could only have privacy and room to express myself concerning them.

We gave early warning, and of course nobody has entered the house in all this time but one or two reckless old bachelors—and they probably wanted to carry the disease to the children of former flames of theirs. The house is still in quarantine and must remain so for a week or two yet—at which time we are hoping to leave for Elmira.

Always your friend

S. L. CLEMENS.

By the end of summer Howells was in Europe, and Clemens, in Elmira, was trying to finish his Mississippi book, which was giving him a great deal of trouble. It was usually so with his non-fiction books; his interest in them was not cumulative; he was prone to grow weary of them, while the menace of his publisher's contract was maddening. Howells's letters, meant to be comforting, or at least entertaining, did not always contribute to his peace of mind. The Library of American Humor which they had planned was an added burden. Before sailing, Howells had written: "Do you suppose you can do your share of the reading at Elmira, while you are writing at the Mississippi book?"

In a letter from London, Howells writes of the good times he is having over there with Osgood, Hutton, John Hay, Aldrich, and Alma Tadema, excursioning to Oxford, feasting, especially "at the Mitre Tavern, where they let you choose your dinner from the joints hanging from the rafter, and have passages that you lose yourself in every time you try to go to your room. . . . Couldn't you and Mrs. Clemens step over for a little while? . . . We have seen lots of nice people and have been most pleasantly made of; but I would rather have you smoke in my face, and talk for half a day just for pleasure, than to go to the best house or club in London." The reader will gather that this could not be entirely soothing to a man shackled by a contract and a book that refused to come to an end.

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MARK TWAIN'S LETTERS

To W. D. Howells, in London:

HARTFORD, CONN. *Oct. 30, 1882.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—I do not expect to find you, so I shan't spend many words on you to wind up in the perdition of some European dead-letter office. I only just want to say that the closing installments of the story are prodigious. All along I was afraid it would be impossible for you to keep up so splendidly to the end; but you were only, I see now, striking eleven. It is in these last chapters that you struck twelve. Go on and write; you can write good books yet, but you can never match this one. And speaking of the book, I inclose something which has been happening here lately.

We have only just arrived at home, and I have not seen Clark on our matters. I cannot see him or any one else, until I get my book finished. The weather turned cold, and we had to rush home, while I still lacked thirty thousand words. I had been sick and got delayed. I am going to write all day and two thirds of the night, until the thing is done, or break down at it. The spur and burden of the contract are intolerable to me. I can endure the irritation of it no longer. I went to work at nine o'clock yesterday morning, and went to bed an hour after midnight. Result of the day, (mainly stolen from books, tho' credit given,) 9500 words, so I reduced my burden by one third in one day. It was five days work in one. I have nothing more to borrow or steal; the rest must all be written. It is ten days work, and unless something breaks, it will be finished in five. We all send love to you and Mrs. Howells, and all the family.

Yours as ever,

MARK.

Again, from Villeneuve, on Lake Geneva, Howells wrote urging him this time to spend the winter with them in Florence, where they would write their great American Comedy of *Orme's Motor*, "which is to enrich us beyond the dreams of avarice. . . . We could have a lot of fun writing it, and you could go home

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with some of the good old Etruscan malaria in your bones, instead of the wretched pinch-beck Hartford article that you are suffering from now . . . it's a great opportunity for you. Besides, nobody over there likes you half as well as I do."

It should be added that *Orme's Motor* was the provisional title that Clemens and Howells had selected for their comedy, which was to be built, in some measure, at least, around the character, or rather from the peculiarities, of Orion Clemens. The Cable mentioned in Mark Twain's reply is, of course, George W. Cable, who only a little while before had come up from New Orleans to conquer the North with his wonderful tales and readings.

To W. D. Howells, in Switzerland:

HARTFORD, *Nov. 4th, 1882.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—Yes, it would be profitable for me to do that, because with your society to help me, I should swiftly finish this now apparently interminable book. But I cannot come, because I am not Boss here, and nothing but dynamite can move Mrs. Clemens away from home in the winter season.

I never had such a fight over a book in my life before. And the foolishest part of the whole business is, that I started Osgood to editing it before I had finished writing it. As a consequence, large areas of it are condemned here and there and yonder, and I have the burden of these unfilled gaps harassing me and the thought of the broken continuity of the work, while I am at the same time trying to build the last quarter of the book. However, at last I have said with sufficient positiveness that I will finish the book at no particular date; that I will not hurry it; that I will not hurry myself; that I will take things easy and comfortably, write when I choose to write, leave it alone when I so prefer. The printers must wait, the artists, the canvassers, and all the rest. I have got everything at a dead standstill, and that is where it ought to be, and that is where it must remain; to follow any other policy would be to make the book

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worse than it already is. I ought to have finished it before showing to anybody, and then sent it across the ocean to you to be edited, as usual; for you seem to be a great many shades happier than you deserve to be, and if I had thought of this thing earlier, I would have acted upon it and taken the tuck somewhat out of your joyousness.

In the same mail with your letter, arrived the enclosed from Orme the motor man. You will observe that he has an office. I will explain that this is a law office and I think it probably does him as much good to have a law office without anything to do in it, as it would another man to have one with an active business attached. You see he is on the electric light lay now. Going to light the city and allow me to take all the stock if I want to. And he will manage it free of charge. It never would occur to this simple soul how much less costly it would be to me, to hire him on a good salary not to manage it. Do you observe the same old eagerness, the same old hurry, springing from the fear that if he does not move with the utmost swiftness, that colossal opportunity will escape him? Now just fancy this same frantic plunging after vast opportunities, going on week after week with this same man, during fifty entire years, and he has not yet learned, in the slightest degree, that there isn't any occasion to hurry; that his vast opportunity will always wait; and that whether it waits or flies, he certainly will never catch it. This immortal hopefulness, fortified by its immortal and unteachable misjudgment, is the immortal feature of this character, for a play; and we will write that play. We should be fools else. That staccato postscript reads as if some new and mighty business were imminent, for it is slung on the paper telegraphically, all the small words left out. I am afraid something newer and bigger than the electric light is swinging across his orbit. Save this letter for an inspiration. I have got a hundred more.

Cable has been here, creating worshipers on all hands,

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He is a marvelous talker on a deep subject. I do not see how even Spencer could unwind a thought more smoothly or orderly, and do it in a cleaner, clearer, crisper English. He astounded Twichell with his faculty. You know when it comes down to moral honesty, limpid innocence, and utterly blemishless piety, the Apostles were mere policemen to Cable; so with this in mind you must imagine him at a midnight dinner in Boston the other night, where we gathered around the board of the Summerset Club; Osgood, full, Boyle O'Reilly, full, Fairchild responsively loaded, and Aldrich and myself possessing the floor, and properly fortified. Cable told Mrs. Clemens when he returned here, that he seemed to have been entertaining himself with horses, and had a dreamy idea that he must have gone to Boston in a cattle-car. It was a very large time. He called it an orgy. And no doubt it was, viewed from his standpoint.

I wish I were in Switzerland, and I wish we could go to Florence; but we have to leave these delights to you; there is no helping it. We all join in love to you and all the family.

Yours as ever

MARK.

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XXIII

LETTERS, 1883, TO HOWELLS AND OTHERS. A GUEST OF THE MARQUIS OF LORNE. THE HISTORY GAME. A PLAY BY HOWELLS AND MARK TWAIN

MARK TWAIN, in due season, finished the Mississippi book and placed it in Osgood's hands for publication. It was a sort of partnership arrangement in which Clemens was to furnish the money to make the book, and pay Osgood a percentage for handling it. It was, in fact, the beginning of Mark Twain's adventures as a publisher.

Howells was not as happy in Florence as he had hoped to be. The social life there overwhelmed him. In February he wrote: "Our two months in Florence have been the most ridiculous time that ever even half-witted people passed. We have spent them in chasing round after people for whom we cared nothing, and being chased by them. My story isn't finished yet, and what part of it is done bears the fatal marks of haste and distraction. Of course, I haven't put pen to paper yet on the play. I wring my hands and beat my breast when I think of how these weeks have been wasted; and how I have been forced to waste them by the infernal social circumstances from which I couldn't escape."

Clemens, now free from the burden of his own book, was light of heart and full of ideas and news; also of sympathy and appreciation. Howells's story of this time was "A Woman's Reason." Governor Jewell, of this letter, was Marshall Jewell, Governor of Connecticut from 1871 to 1873. Later, he was Minister to Russia, and in 1874 was United States Postmaster-General.

To W. D. Howells, in Florence:

HARTFORD, *March 1st, 1883.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—We got ourselves ground up in that same mill, once, in London, and another time in

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Paris. It is a kind of foretaste of hell. There is no way to avoid it except by the method which you have now chosen. One must live secretly and cut himself utterly off from the human race, or life in Europe becomes an unbearable burden and work an impossibility. I learned something last night, and maybe it may reconcile me to go to Europe again sometime. I attended one of the astonishingly popular lectures of a man by the name of Stoddard, who exhibits interesting stereopticon pictures and then knocks the interest all out of them with his comments upon them. But all the world go there to look and listen, and are apparently well satisfied. And they ought to be fully satisfied, if the lecturer would only keep still, or die in the first act. But he described how retired tradesmen and farmers in Holland load a lazy scow with the family and the household effects, and then loaf along the waterways of the low countries all the summer long, paying no visits, receiving none, and just lazying a heavenly life out in their own private unpestered society, and doing their literary work, if they have any, wholly uninterrupted. If you had hired such a boat and sent for us we should have a couple of satisfactory books ready for the press now with no marks of interruption, vexatious wearinesses, and other hellishnesses visible upon them anywhere. We shall have to do this another time. We have lost an opportunity for the present. Do you forget that Heaven is packed with a multitude of all nations and that these people are all on the most familiar how-the-hell-are-you footing with Talmage swinging around the circle to all eternity hugging the saints and patriarchs and archangels, and forcing you to do the same unless you choose to make yourself an object of remark if you refrain? Then why do you try to get to Heaven? Be warned in time.

We have all read your two opening numbers in the Century, and consider them almost beyond praise. I hear no dissent from this verdict. I did not know there

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was an untouched personage in American life, but I had forgotten the auctioneer. You have photographed him accurately.

I have been an utterly free person for a month or two; and I do not believe I ever so greatly appreciated and enjoyed and realized the absence of the chains of slavery as I do this time. Usually my first waking thought in the morning is, "I have nothing to do to-day, I belong to nobody, I have ceased from being a slave." Of course the highest pleasure to be got out of freedom, and having nothing to do, is labor. Therefore I labor. But I take my time about it. I work one hour or four as happens to suit my mind, and quit when I please. And so these days are days of entire enjoyment. I told Clark the other day to jog along comfortable and not get in a sweat. I said I believed you would not be able to enjoy editing that library over there, where you have your own legitimate work to do and be pestered to death by society besides; therefore I thought if he got it ready for you against your return, that that would be best and pleasantest.

You remember Governor Jewell, and the night he told about Russia, down in the library. He was taken with a cold about three weeks ago, and I stepped over one evening, proposing to beguile an idle hour for him with a yarn or two, but was received at the door with whispers, and the information that he was dying. His case had been dangerous during that day only and he died that night, two hours after I left. His taking off was a prodigious surprise, and his death has been most widely and sincerely regretted. Wm. E. Dodge, the father-in-law of one of Jewell's daughters, dropped suddenly dead the day before Jewell died, but Jewell died without knowing that. Jewell's widow went down to New York, to Dodge's house, the day after Jewell's funeral, and was to return here day before yesterday, and she did—in a coffin. She fell dead, of heart disease, while her trunks were being packed for her return home. Florence Strong, one of

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Jewell's daughters, who lives in Detroit, started East on an urgent telegram, but missed a connection somewhere, and did not arrive here in time to see her father alive. She was his favorite child, and they had always been like lovers together. He always sent her a box of fresh flowers once a week to the day of his death; a custom which he never suspended even when he was in Russia. Mrs. Strong had only just reached her Western home again when she was summoned to Hartford to attend her mother's funeral.

I have had the impulse to write you several times. I shall try to remember better henceforth.

With sincerest regards to all of you,

Yours as ever,

MARK.

Mark Twain made another trip to Canada in the interest of copyright—this time to protect the Mississippi book. When his journey was announced by the press, the Marquis of Lorne telegraphed an invitation inviting him to be his guest at Rideau Hall, in Ottawa. Clemens accepted, of course, and was handsomely entertained by the daughter of Queen Victoria and her husband, then Governor-General of Canada.

On his return to Hartford he found that Osgood had issued a curious little book, for which Clemens had prepared an introduction. It was an absurd volume, though originally issued with serious intent, its title being *The New Guide of the Conversation in Portuguese and English*.[1] Evidently the "New Guide" was prepared by some simple Portuguese soul with but slight knowledge of English beyond that which could be obtained from a dictionary, and his literal translation of English idioms are often startling, as, for instance, this one, taken at random:

"A little learneds are happies enough for to may to satisfy their fancies on the literature."

[1] *The New Guide of the Conversation in Portuguese and English*, by Pedro Carolino, with an introduction by Mark Twain. Osgood, Boston, 1883. See, also, *Mark Twain: A Biography*, chap. cxliii.

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Mark Twain thought this quaint book might amuse his royal hostess, and forwarded a copy in what he considered to be the safe and proper form.

To Col. De Winton, in Ottawa, Canada:

HARTFORD, *June 4, '83.*

DEAR COLONEL DE WINTON,—I very much want to send a little book to her Royal Highness—the famous Portuguese phrase book; but I do not know the etiquette of the matter, and I would not wittingly infringe any rule of propriety. It is a book which I perfectly well know will amuse her "some at most" if she has not seen it before, and will still amuse her "some at least," even if she has inspected it a hundred times already. So I will send the book to you, and you who know all about the proper observances will protect me from indiscretion, in case of need, by putting the said book in the fire, and remaining as dumb as I generally was when I was up there. I do not rebind the thing, because that would look as if I thought it worth keeping, whereas it is only worth glancing at and casting aside.

Will you please present my compliments to Mrs. De Winton and Mrs. Mackenzie?—and I beg to make my sincere compliments to you, also, for your infinite kindnesses to me. I did have a delightful time up there, most certainly.

Truly yours

S. L. CLEMENS.

P. S. Although the introduction dates a year back, the book is only just now issued. A good long delay.

S. L. C.

Howells, writing from Venice, in April, manifested special interest in the play project: "Something that would run like Scheherazade, for a thousand and one nights," so perhaps his book was going better. He proposed that they devote the month

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of October to the work, and inclosed a letter from Mallory, who owned not only a religious paper, *The Churchman*, but also the Madison Square Theater, and was anxious for a Howells play. Twenty years before Howells had been Consul to Venice, and he wrote, now: "The idea of my being here is benumbing and silencing. I feel like the Wandering Jew, or the ghost of the Cardiff giant."

He returned to America in July. Clemens sent him word of welcome, with glowing reports of his own undertakings. The story on which he was piling up MS. was *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, begun seven years before at Quarry Farm. He had no great faith in it then, and though he had taken it up again in 1880, his interest had not lasted to its conclusion. This time, however, he was in the proper spirit, and the story would be finished.

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

ELMIRA, *July 20, '83.*

MY DEAR HOWELLS,—We are desperately glad you and your gang are home again—may you never travel again, till you go aloft or alow. Charley Clark has gone to the other side for a run—will be back in August. He has been sick, and needed the trip very much.

Mrs. Clemens had a long and wasting spell of sickness last Spring, but she is pulling up, now. The children are booming, and my health is ridiculous, it's so robust, notwithstanding the newspaper mis-reports.

I haven't piled up MS so in years as I have done since we came here to the farm three weeks and a half ago. Why, it's like old times, to step right into the study, damp from the breakfast table, and sail right in and sail right on, the whole day long, without thought of running short of stuff or words.

I wrote 4000 words to-day and I touch 3000 and upwards pretty often, and don't fall below 2600 any working day. And when I get fagged out, I lie abed a couple of days and read and smoke, and then go it again for 6 or 7 days. I have finished one small book, and am away along in a big

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one that I half-finished two or three years ago. I expect to complete it in a month or six weeks or two months more. And *I* shall *like* it, whether anybody else does or not.

It's a kind of companion to Tom Sawyer. There's a raft episode from it in second or third chapter of life on the Mississippi. . . .

I'm booming, these days—got health and spirits to *waste*—got an overplus; and if I were at home, we would write a play. But we must do it anyhow by and by.

We stay here till Sep. 10; then maybe a week at Indian Neck for sea air, then home.

We are powerful glad you are all back; and send love according.

Yrs Ever

MARK.

To Orion Clemens and family, in Keokuk, Ia.:

ELMIRA, *July 21, '83.*

Private

DEAR MA AND ORION AND MOLLIE,—I don't know that I have anything new to report, except that Livy is still gaining, and all the rest of us flourishing. I haven't had such booming working-days for many years. I am piling up manuscript in a really astonishing way. I believe I shall complete, in two months, a book which I have been fooling over for 7 years. This summer it is no more trouble to me to write than it is to lie.

Day before yesterday I felt slightly warned to knock off work for one day. So I did it, and took the open air. Then I struck an idea for the instruction of the children, and went to work and carried it out. It took me all day. I measured off 817 feet of the road-way in our farm grounds, with a foot-rule, and then divided it up among the English reigns, from the Conqueror down to 1883, allowing one foot to the year. I whittled out a basket of

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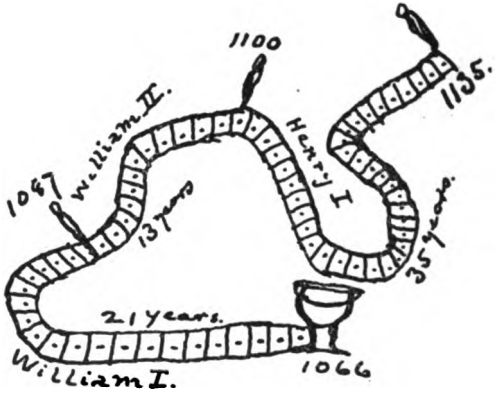
little pegs and drove one in the ground at the beginning of each reign, and gave it that King's name—thus:



I measured all the reigns exactly—as many feet to the reign as there were years in it. You can look out over the grounds and see the little pegs from the front door—some of them close together, like Richard II, Richard Cromwell, James II, &c; and some prodigiously wide apart, like Henry III, Edward III, George III, &c. It gives the children a realizing sense of the length or brevity of a reign. Shall invent a violent *game* to go with it.

And in bed, last night, I invented a way to play it indoors—in a far more voluminous way, as to multiplicity of dates and events—on a *cribbage board.*

Hello, supper's ready. Love to all. Good bye.

SAML.

Orion Clemens would naturally get excited over the idea of the game and its commercial possibilities. Not more so than his brother, however, who presently employed him to arrange a quantity of historical data which the game was to teach. For a season, indeed, interest in the game became a sort of midsummer madness which pervaded the two households, at Keokuk and at Quarry Farm. Howells wrote his approval of the idea of "learning history by the running foot," which was a pun, even

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if unintentional, for in its out-door form it was a game of speed as well as knowledge.

Howells adds that he has noticed that the newspapers are exploiting Mark Twain's new invention of a history game, and we shall presently see how this happened.

Also, in this letter, Howells speaks of an English nobleman to whom he has given a letter of introduction. "He seemed a simple, quiet, gentlemanly man, with a good taste in literature, which he evinced by going about with my books in his pockets, and talking of yours."

To W. D. Howells, in Boston:

My dear Howells,—How odd it seems, to sit down to write a letter with the feeling that you've got *time* to do it. But I'm done work, for this season, and so have got time. I've done two seasons' work in one, and haven't anything left to do, now, but revise. I've written eight or nine hundred MS pages in such a brief space of time that I mustn't name the number of days; *I* shouldn't believe it myself, and of course couldn't expect you to. I used to restrict myself to 4 or 5 hours a day and 5 days in the week, but this time I've wrought from breakfast till 5.15 p.m. six days in the week; and once or twice I smouched a Sunday when the boss wasn't looking. Nothing is half so good as literature hooked on Sunday, on the sly.

I wrote you and Twichell on the same night, about the game, and was appalled to get a note from him saying he was going to print part of my letter, and was going to do it before I could get a chance to forbid it. I telegraphed him, but was of course too late.

If you haven't ever tried to invent an indoor historical game, *don't*. I've got the thing at last so it will work, I guess, but I don't want any more tasks of that kind. When I wrote you, I thought I *had* it; whereas I was only merely entering upon the initiatory difficulties of it. I might have known it wouldn't be an easy job, or somebody would have invented a decent historical game long ago—a thing which

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nobody *had* done. I think I've got it in pretty fair shape—so I have *caveated* it.

Earl of Onston—is that it? All right, we shall be very glad to receive them and get acquainted with them. And much obliged to you, too. There's plenty of worse people than the nobilities. I went up and spent a week with the Marquis and the Princess Louise, and had as good a time as *I* want.

I'm powerful glad you are all back again; and we *will* come up there if our little trilbe will give us the necessary furlough; and if we can't get it, you folks must come to us and give us an extension of time. We get home Sept. 11.

Hello, I think I see Waring coming!

Good-by—letter from Clark, which explains for him. Love to you all from the

CLEMENSES.

No—it wasn't Waring. I wonder what the devil *has* become of that man. He was to spend to-day with us, and the day's most gone, now.

We are enjoying your story with our usual unspeakableness; and I'm right glad you threw in the shipwreck and the mystery—I like it. Mrs. Crane thinks it's the best story you've written yet. We—but *we always* think the last one is the best. And why shouldn't it be? Practice helps.

P. S. I thought I had sent all our loves to all of you, but Mrs. Clemens says I haven't. Damn it, a body can't think of everything; but a woman thinks you can. I better seal this, now—else there'll be more criticism.

I perceive I haven't got the love in, yet. Well, we *do* send the love of all the family to all the Howellses.

S. L. C.

There had been some delay and postponement in the matter of the play which Howells and Clemens agreed to write. They did not put in the entire month of October as they had planned, but they did put in a portion of that month, the latter half, working out their old idea. In the end it became a revival of

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Colonel Sellers, or rather a caricature of that extravagant, gentle-hearted old visionary. Clemens had always complained that the actor Raymond had never brought out the finer shades of Colonel Sellers's character, but Raymond in his worst performance never belied his original as did Howells and Clemens in his dramatic revival. These two, working together, let their imaginations run riot with disastrous results. The reader can judge something of this himself, from *The American Claimant*, the book which Mark Twain would later build from the play.

But at this time they thought it a great triumph. They had "cracked their sides" laughing over its construction, as Howells once said, and they thought the world would do the same over its performance. They decided to offer it to Raymond, but rather haughtily, indifferently, because any number of other actors would be waiting for it.

But this was a miscalculation. Raymond now turned the tables. Though favorable to the idea of a new play, he declared this one did not present his old Sellers at all, but a lunatic. In the end he returned the MS. with a brief note. Attempts had already been made to interest other actors, and these efforts would continue for some time.

END OF VOL. I

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